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# THREE-QUARTERS OF A CENTURY

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# THREE-QUARTERS OF A CENTURY

## (1807 to 1882)

## A Retrospect

WRITTEN FROM DOCUMENTS AND MEMORY (1877—1882)

BY THE LATE

Rev. AUGUSTUS J. THÉBAUD, S.J.

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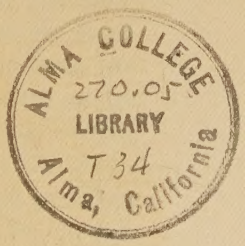
Vol. II

ITALY

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# PREFACE

THE present volume closes Father Thébaud's reminiscenses of "Three-quarters of a Century." It deals with his experiences in Italy, whither he went in 1835, after he had determined to join the Society of Jesus. His stay in Italy was relatively short, but Father Thébaud was a keen and quick observer, who took in at a glance the symptoms of the social movements to come. Aside from his general observations his pictures of several interesting personages, such as Napoleon's uncle Cardinal Fesch, Dom Prosper Guéranger, Fathers Bresciani and Perrone, lend life and interest to the narrative, as does also his portraiture of religious and monastic life in the Italy of the first half of the nineteenth century. All of these experiences are set forth in a vigorous snappy style which readily recalls to the Editor the picture of the venerable old priest as he appeared during the last twenty years of his life. Even then he was full of vigor and animation and his memory, as well as his imagination, was active and positive. His early views had maintained themselves though they were no doubt modified greatly by his long residence in the United States.

In accordance with Father Thébaud's oft-expressed intentions to give only his own experiences the Editor has published here only Father Thébaud's personal impressions and recollections and omitted various

lengthy chapters on Art and Literature mostly based on reading.

In conclusion the Editor desires to thank the Rev. Charles B. Macksey, S.J., Professor of Moral Philosophy in the Gregorian University at Rome for securing for him the interesting illustrations by Alinari which, he doubts not, will give added interest to the author's story.

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# ITALY

## CHAPTER I

### OFF TO ROME

On October 10, 1835, I left Nantes for Angers, where I intended to spend a few days in the family of my friend Eugène Gardereau, previous to my final departure for a two years' stay in Italy. I have already said a word of this excellent and talented clergyman. He had been educated with me at the *Petit Séminaire* of Nantes, but we became much better acquainted during the four years we were together as professors in the same institution before our ordination to the priesthood. An intimate friendship bound us together. There were no secrets between us, and, though all the young professors and teachers of the house formed, as it were, a band of brothers—and I particularly considered them all my friends and well-wishers—there existed between Gardereau and me a closer friendship, which sprang from a similarity of views, and thought, and inclination such as, I fancy, is rarely found in two young men of twenty-three or twenty-four. I had, of course, acquainted him with my intention of entering the Society of Jesus, and he, on his part, had intimated to me that he entertained similar ideas though they led him in a different direction. If he

did not say more, he added, it was only because the project was not yet mature and he could not speak of it even to me. This was before I left Nantes.

He learned from a letter of mine that I was on the point of starting, and he wrote to tell me that I should not fail to stop at Angers for a day or two while on my way to Paris. He had something of importance to communicate to me and did not like to do so in writing. I, therefore, went to Angers and his family received me as an honored guest, though I had never before entered their house. They were highly respected in Angers. They were all staunch Catholics, though some of their relatives were open infidels; and the celebrated Larevellière-Lépeaux, one of the former members of the French Directory and the founder of the rationalistic sect called the *Théophilantropes*, was an uncle of Eugène Gardereau, the brother of his mother, if I mistake not. Eugène was sure of promotion in the Church, and Mgr. Montant, the Bishop of Angers, had made him a canon of his cathedral immediately after his ordination.

This is what I learned from him: Eugène had made up his mind not to remain a secular priest. I had already suspected as much. But he did not wish to become a Jesuit, though he had the greatest respect for the Society. He gave me several reasons for following the course he was about to take; the chief one was, as far as I can remember, the false position of the Jesuits before the world. For many years as *Pères de la Foi*, and even after their restoration by Pius VII, they had thought it prudent to conceal their name and, consequently, their object. For this he did not blame them. It was probably necessary at the time; but in consequence of this they were in the common opinion

neither fish nor fowl. The closing of their colleges in June, 1828, had given a startling demonstration of this. The bishops in the various dioceses, in order to ward off a blow which might be fatal to Christian education, had declared the Jesuits to be their subjects and said that they had chosen them to direct their *Petits Séminaires*. Henceforth no one could know whether the Jesuits were secular priests or regulars. The eight colleges which they directed were certainly not colleges of the Society, but episcopal institutions. This was, in the opinion of my friend, a weakness in their position, and he thought they would have done better to take up an unequivocal position from the beginning. There was some truth in my friend's view, but the Jesuits were not responsible for the position which circumstances forced on them. To show this it suffices to recall that when in 1845 or 1846 Father de Ravignan published his little book *De l'Institut des Jésuites*, which again placed the Order openly before the public, it proved to be the beginning of their subsequent success in France.

My friend then stated that there was now question of re-establishing the Benedictines in France. I had not heard of this project before, and he added that this was the project he had in view when he spoke so mysteriously to me. He could not, at the time, make it known even to me, because he had solemnly promised not to say a word to anybody until everything was ready for carrying it out. Now the moment had arrived. A pious and talented young priest of the diocese of Le Mans, the Abbé Guéranger, had made all his arrangements with the full consent of his bishop, Mgr. Bouvier. In a week or two, perhaps, certainly before a month

was passed, the news would be published throughout France, for there would be no concealment of any sort, and it was time, he said, that religious houses of men should be established everywhere with the full knowledge of everybody. Of course, Rome had been consulted. The Abbé Guéranger was on the point of leaving France and of going to Rome in order to learn the final views of the Holy Father, and to enter the Benedictine Order as a novice.

Finally my friend told me in confidence that a fine spot had been purchased by Guéranger where, as soon as he would have returned from Rome with the canonical power of restoring the Benedictines under the name of *Congrégation de France*, the monastery of Solesmes would be founded. A bright smile them illumined the intelligent face of my friend: "There," said he, "my dear abbé, I intend to spend the remainder of my life in prayer and study. How happy," he added, "if you were also to be one of us."

This was an open thrust at me which, I confess, I did not like. But it came from a friendly heart, and I could not be displeased with him. I thought, however, that an explanation from me was required, and I answered with simplicity and determination. "You understand, my dear canon, that it is now too late. Not only have I engaged myself and cannot withdraw honorably, not only has the Bishop of Nantes, Mgr. de Guérines, in the permission which he gave me to leave his diocese, stipulated that if my intentions were thwarted I must return to Nantes and place myself at his disposal. But even in case you had said to me what you have told me to-day before I had taken any engagement I would scarcely have felt any inclination

to join you. My actual determination has been chiefly prompted by the spiritual advice of good Monsieur de Courson, whom you know and revere as well as I do. In fact, I did not at first think of the Jesuits. My inclination has always been for foreign missions, and at that time the Jesuits had scarcely any of these under their charge. When I first opened my heart to the Sulpician I merely wanted him to tell me how I could be admitted into the Propaganda at Rome. He answered that, even if I succeeded in obtaining a place in the foreign missions of the Propaganda, I would be left too much to my own control, and I would find myself exposed to temptations of which I had no idea. My only safe refuge was the Society of Jesus. They had begun to attend to foreign missions, and I could safely go wherever they would send me. This was his advice and I followed it. Study and prayer among the Benedictines is certainly excellent, but God had not given me an inclination to this kind of life and I must follow God's will."

Perhaps I was mistaken in this, since I was finally sent to Kentucky, which was not the object I had in view in wishing to be a foreign missionary. But I was determined to do what I thought was the will of God, and when Gardereau heard all I had to say he ceased pressing me to become a Benedictine. I spent three full days with him in the most pleasant intercourse, and when we parted we were as strong friends as ever. It seems he is still alive (1881). He must have been lately expelled from Solesmes with all his brethren. If so, I hope he has since returned to his dear monastery, as it seems many members of the expelled Congregations have done.

When, therefore, I left France for the first time religious Congregations of men were going to be restored in France. Already, besides the Brothers of the Christian Doctrine, there were some Capuchins in Provence. I travelled in the stage from Avignon to Aix with one of them, and he seemed to enjoy the good will of all the passengers. The Benedictines would soon be heard of. But, best of all, in two years more Lacordaire, who was also going to Rome after having started the celebrated *Conférences de Notre Dame*, was to come back together with Guéranger. It was their plan to engage a *vetturino* and spend thirty days alone in a slow vehicle, going north through the States of the Church, Tuscany, Lombardy, and Piedmont, before reaching France.

Religious communities of men were thus destined to work for the social and moral restoration of France. A few years more and the world would be astonished at their numbers and their variety, as shown last year (1880), when another attempt was made at their destruction.

## CHAPTER II

### LEGHORN

When I arrived in Marseilles on my way to Rome I intended to take the steamer to Civita Vecchia, so as to reach the Holy City at the end of October, 1835. But I learned that passengers and goods from Marseilles were forbidden to enter the States of the Church on account of the cholera which had raged in that city three months before. In 1832 the Papal government had by its precautions succeeded in warding off the plague when it first appeared in Southern Europe; and in 1835 they prevented it from spreading directly in the Papal dominions, which it invaded only in August, 1837. I therefore took passage for Leghorn and resolved to spend a few weeks in Tuscany. Even in Leghorn I had to submit to a quarantine for seven days and I could not enter the city before the second of November. A Frenchman on board acquainted with the place had given me the address of an excellent boarding-house kept by a lady who spoke the Tuscan dialect very well. On my way to her house I could not help being struck by the solemnity with which All Souls' Day was kept, so different from what I had known in Nantes. All the bells of the city were tolling, most of the stores were closed, and before I reached my boarding-house I met a solemn procession led by several Franciscans who, I was told, were going to the public cemetery to celebrate a Mass for the dead in a mortuary

chapel there. This appeared to me a truly Catholic way of spending the yearly day of mourning. It was so much more impressive than the French custom of celebrating All Souls' Day by depositing a wreath of immortelles on the tombs of friends.

After my breakfast I inquired of the lady of the house who those religious were whom I had met, and she answered they were *Francescani Osservantini*. I knew this already from their dress, which I had often seen in illustrations, but I had scarcely any notion of their Order, which had not yet been re-established in France, and I was desirous of becoming better acquainted with them. Their church was quite near, but the lady told me it was too late that day to assist at their office; the following morning I could do so and be present also at their conventual Mass. I had no letters for Leghorn, whither I had come unexpectedly. I did not intend to apply for permission to say Mass, and I was satisfied with hearing it every day.

On my entrance into the Franciscan church on the following morning I was impressed both by the interior of the sacred edifice and by the demeanor of the people. I knew from my reading that the churches of that Order were remarkable for their simplicity, not to say bareness, and St. Francis had very earnestly recommended this to his disciples. But I was not prepared to see his recommendations carried out so literally. As I had heard that the religious edifices in Italy were always profusely decorated, often to gaudiness, I was agreeably surprised to meet with an Order which strictly kept the rules prescribed by its founder. I remarked, also, that nearly all the statues which adorned the interior of the church were those of Franciscan

saints, and their dress little resembled that of modern dandies. Still many women, not all of them poor, were kneeling and praying with great fervor before these statues, which were more remarkable for their expression of piety than for their art.

Throughout the whole church the people were engaged in prayer and there was no difference perceptible between the men and the women. Still it was not a holiday and what I witnessed was probably an every-day occurrence. Soon the religious entered, walking in procession, and took their seats in stalls placed in a semicircular row back of the sanctuary. They were at least thirty in number and their movements were dignified and devout. They began at once to chant the office, which lasted scarcely half an hour, but it produced on me an impression which I can never forget. I had not as yet heard anything of the kind. In a short visit I once paid to the Trappists of La Melleraye in France I had not been present at any part of their office except the solemn singing of the *Salve Regina* at dusk. It was certainly highly impressive, but it appeared to me too long—twenty-five minutes for so short an anthem—and the vocal efforts of the monks seemed sometimes to aim at producing an effect which they certainly did not achieve. The singing of the office by canons in cathedrals is a mere reciting of the breviary to which I had been accustomed in the theological seminary. The Franciscans of Leghorn sang the true plain chant naturally and devoutly, and deeply touched my heart.

I fell on my knees—there were neither pews nor chairs—everybody had to stand or kneel. Fortunately there was near me a pillar supporting a corner of the roof. I leaned against it and freely gave way

to my feelings. This continued not only during the office but likewise during Mass which immediately followed. When everything was over I could not control the desire I felt of becoming a little better acquainted with the good Franciscans. There was, it was true, a difficulty in the way. I might be able to understand them, since I could make out whatever my landlady said, but it was doubtful if they would understand a word of my elementary Italian. I trusted, however, to Providence and to the good nature of the Italian character, of which I had already had several proofs. As soon as the entire brotherhood had slowly filed from the choir to the sacristy I followed them and found myself in the midst of a crowd which immediately made room for me. By my dress and chiefly my *rabat* they saw that I was a French ecclesiastic. At that time a Frenchman, particularly a priest, was sure to meet with courtesy everywhere in Italy.

I addressed one of them with all the politeness I could command and asked permission to visit the interior of the monastery. I was curious to see the cells, the corridors, the library, etc. But evidently they had not the least idea of what I desired. After standing silently for a moment, one of them evidently thought that he had guessed my meaning; and as they were all going to take their breakfast, he imagined no doubt that I was a poor devil of a foreigner in quest of a meal and very hungry. He held out his hand, which I took with pleasure, and led me at the head of the community to the refectory where everything was prepared for them. As soon as we entered the large dining-hall I perceived the mistake my guide had so naturally made, and in a few words of bad Latin I

expressed my regret for having disturbed them, said that I had already taken my *cioccolata*, and bowing withdrew at once and found my way to the door of the convent.

My landlady, whom I called immediately to my little parlor, for I had the sole use of a parlor in her house, could not repress her laughter when I told her the story of my adventure in the convent. She began to speak so volubly of these good friars that I could not understand half of what she said, which seemed to be a satire on them. She evidently did not like them, and some of her expressions implied, I thought, charges of misconduct. I knew that throughout Italy at that time, as well as in many other countries, there was violent opposition to religious Orders and that calumnies against them were spread among the people. I determined to sift to the bottom the charges I thought she had made. But when she finally grasped my meaning, she raised her hands in wonder and said she had not intended to convey any such idea.

At last speaking slowly and deliberately she made me understand what she meant. Her dislike came from what she called their ignorance. She said that they did not even understand the Latin they chanted in their offices, that they were good for nothing except to extract money from the people. And to prove that this was not unfounded she said that the neighbors, often young fellows, without the least education, who gained their living as cobblers or weavers, enter the house, take the habit, and come out only a couple of years afterwards, fully ordained. After having asked her some other questions, I became convinced that even their enemies had nothing else to say against them.

We shall see that their ignorance was not so great as my landlady represented it, and that they knew enough to do a great deal of good among the people. I convinced myself that no great relaxation of discipline had found its way among the Franciscans, and that no scandalous conduct on their part disgraced the Church, as was often the case in France before the French Revolution.

Before I say more about the Minorites, the name, I think, given the Franciscans of the Observance in England—a word on the general disposition of the Italian people towards the religious Congregations will be acceptable. The sprightly little woman who has just been introduced to the reader was not one of the worst enemies of the monks. There was then in Italy a fairly large class of people who hated everything connected with religion. Most of them were affiliated with the various sects of secret societies, Freemasons, Carbonari, Mazzinians, etc., who were then found everywhere, even in small towns. They were chiefly young men and it would be wrong to identify them with the Italian people. Most of the farmers, artisans, workmen of every description, were warmly attached to the Catholic Church and the religious Orders. My little landlady, unfortunately, did not belong to these fervent Catholics. She was rather lukewarm in her faith and there were many others like her. Still she had a deep feeling for religion in her own way and she was very remarkable for her social qualities and desire to oblige. As she was in this respect a worthy representative of a great number of Italians, I must show this by an anecdote.

So far I have spoken only of her; she had a husband,

who was never in evidence. He was at the same time the proprietor and the cook of the establishment, and an excellent cook he was. But he left to his wife the entire management of his boarders. This was a profitable arrangement because her attractiveness was so great that her apartments were always full. Having heard from her of a beautiful sanctuary of the Madonna built on the declivity of Monte Nero, three miles south of Leghorn, I made up my mind to walk thither and dine in the village adjoining the church. She warmly praised my design but did not approve of my dining there. "In Leghorn," she said, "there is nothing like this beautiful church and it is always a pleasure to pray there at the altar of the Madonna. If I had not so much to do here, I would often make a pilgrimage to that sanctuary, and I have often received in it favors from the Mother of God. Besides from the top of the mountain you can see the vast expanse of the sea and the islands with which it is dotted. But before you start you must take a good breakfast and I will have a dinner for you when you come back, because you will not find anything good to eat in that village." I heartily thanked the lady for her amiable intention; but begged of her not to take so much trouble for me. I had already taken my breakfast and in the village I should surely find a plate of *minestra* and a piece of bread and cheese. This would be enough for me until supper-time. She cast on me an ironical look of unbelief in my abstemiousness and let me depart, begging of me, however, to pray to the Madonna for her.

The trip was all that could be desired. I was scarcely out of the city when I saw Monte Nero before me, but the slope was so gentle that, though it was three

miles long, it looked to me as if I were walking on a level road. Meanwhile the more I went on the more I could admire the blue expanse of the Mediterranean; and before I reached the church I had before me all the islands of which the landlady had spoken. She had not mentioned their names; perhaps she had never cared to know them. I was not impolite enough to ask her and perhaps cause her to make some blunder in geography. But before reaching the church I met near a very neat rural cottage a man above the common who must, I thought, be acquainted with what I desired to know. As soon as he could understand my question —a pretty difficult operation for him—he told me that the nearest island, which seemed to be entirely covered with beautiful woods and totally uninhabited, was called Caprara or Capraja, on account of the goats which were found on it. The reader is aware that Garibaldi is now its owner and lives there (March 1, 1881). "The island farther southwest is Elba," the gentleman said, "and being a Frenchman you must know its history under Napoleon I. Finally," he added, "the long line visible near the horizon yonder toward the west is Corsica, a part of France, though it is otherwise Italian." I had food enough for reflection on my way up the mountain, though Caprara itself did not at that time convey any idea to me. When I at last entered the church I had many things to pray for besides Napoleon and the Corsicans, so that I spent a most delightful hour at the foot of the altar of Mary.

When I arrived I thought I was completely alone. Nothing stirred in the interior of the edifice except the flickering light of several lamps burning before the image of the Madonna. The marble walls on all sides

were beautifully carved though the church was built in a wilderness; paintings, statues, arabesques, all those splendid forms of art so common in Italian churches, so rare still in my time in those of France; the altar chiefly resplendent with gold and precious gems and the tabernacle towering over it. All the surroundings of the sanctuary filled my soul with emotions of praise and thankfulness to Christ and of tender devotion for His sweet Mother. I had been nearly a quarter of an hour in that ecstasy when I perceived I was not alone in the church. I suddenly heard something move along the wall on the left side and looking in that direction I saw a confessional which was soon opened and out of which a religious came, whose habit I could not recognize. I heard afterwards that the Order attached to the church was that of Vallombrosa, found almost exclusively in Tuscany. It is an offshoot of the Benedictine Order and was founded by St. Gualbert. However, my discomfiture among the Franciscans of two days previous did not encourage me to question him. He directly returned to the sacristy. A pious woman whom he had just heard in confession remained in the church for some moments and finally I was truly alone.

It was time to think of satisfying my hunger and as soon as I came out in the open air human nature cried out peremptorily for the gratification of my lower appetite. I soon found out that there was only one *locanda* in the village, so that there was no choice. Before leaving Leghorn I had taken the precaution of putting into my pocket as much money as would buy a good dinner at *Véry au Palais Royal* in Paris; and I was sure I would find something sufficiently appetizing

even in this solitude. I was bound to appear before my landlady perfectly well in body and mind and justified in stoutly refusing any dinner she might have prepared for me. In the *locanda* there was no other traveller and, though the people received me with all the display of Italian politeness there was no roast on the spit, and no frying-pan hissing and smoking on the range. In fact, there was no appearance of a range.

I inquired if they could procure for me a plate of good hot *minestra* and the answer was quite satisfactory. Could they fry me some chops or broil a chicken? It was very unfortunate, they said, that I had not come an hour or two sooner; I would then have found them in good time. What kind of meat had they or was there any meat in the house? To be sure there was and I would soon have the proof of it. Of course they had good wine and excellent cheese. This alone with a piece of bread, which is always excellent in Italy, was more than sufficient to allay my hunger. I therefore sat down at the table and waited patiently.

The *minestra* came first and it was hot enough. The ordinary name in England, and in France, is soup, but there is something peculiar in Italian soup; it is never served in the peninsula without plenty of cheese in it, and I soon learned to like it though I had never tasted it thus served in France. When, however, the *minestra* was placed before me in an immense bowl containing soup enough for half a dozen troopers, the idea of swallowing it turned out to be not only a problem but an impossibility. The liquid appeared to be rancid grease, and the cheese, instead of the appetizing *parmeggiano* reduced by grating to powder, was an abominable paste most offensive to the nostrils and

cut in large pieces which were floating on the broth, like half liquid mud in a pool of dirty water. I begged of the server to take it away and bring me the meat. When the plate containing it was placed on the table I asked myself of what kind of an animal it had been a part; was it beef, lamb, mutton, pork, or a fowl? It would have been impossible for me to determine and the people of the *locanda* could not tell me. They only said it was meat.

The reader will naturally ask how I could converse so fluently with these rough people, whilst I could not be understood by the Franciscans. In answer I must say first that the dialogue in that *locanda* was not exactly so sprightly as it is given here, and it took more time to go through it. Secondly, I had made a particular study of Italian words connected with eating, drinking, dressing, etc., and Italy, owing to the great number of foreigners travelling around, was full of dictionaries of conversation.

Not to weary the reader it suffices to say that the only thing I could obtain fit to eat or drink was a good *pagnotta* and a glass of very ordinary wine. The cheese itself, as has been seen, could not be touched. In going back to Leghorn I reflected on what was going to take place when I would appear before my landlady. She would have a good laugh at me, and I did not wish to make myself too ridiculous. I made up my mind how I would explain the matter without telling too outrageous a lie, and I went on with a rather light stomach but certainly with a buoyant heart, and I reached home in due time. It was three or four o'clock in the afternoon.

The lady was cordial in her welcome and full of

winning smiles. I, too, smiled in answer, and it was not a sham, for I was exuberant with good spirits. I expressed my delight with what I had seen and felt, and did not forget to tell that I had thought of her at the foot of Mary's statue. She thanked me sincerely. But she was evidently burning with the desire of asking other questions; and she at last came out. Here I must give the dialogue as far as I can remember the words.

"Please tell me," she said, "what kind of dinner you had in the village. Did you like it?" "I must say, Madame," I replied, "that it was not so good as those you give me here; and, of course, I did not expect this. I can say, however, that my stomach is not empty, and I can very well wait for the usual time of your supper." "This," she said, "is no answer to my question. We must come to particulars. You spoke of *minestra* before you left; and you must tell me with your usual frankness what kind of broth they served you." "This, Madame, would be impossible for me, because—since I must be frank with you—I had scarcely the courage to look into the contents of the bowl and sent it away without touching it."

"Bravo," she exclaimed full of glee, "I am glad that you do not tell me a fib as many Italians in your place would do through courtesy; but what about the cheese?" "Very inferior to your *parmeggiano*, Madame, and I am also totally ignorant of its taste, being satisfied with what my nostrils told me." She could not contain herself and burst into loud laughter. "But had you any meat and what was it?" "I am perfectly unable to answer that question for the same reason. But I must repeat in conclusion that my stomach is

not empty and I can very well wait for supper." "Not until you have got your dinner first," and jumping up from her chair she rang the bell and two minutes later an excellent little meal was served.

Was it not, I say, delightful to live in this house, especially considering that I had to pay only two francs a day? This, I know, will appear incredible to the reader; still it is an honest fact. The landlady, like all the Italian landladies at that time whom I knew, served the public not for the sake of gain only. She did it chiefly because it enabled her to exercise her social inclinations, and she was particularly delighted to be in constant intercourse with peoples of other countries who either amused or instructed her. The cause of it was the training the Catholic religion had given to the people's feelings, raising them above the low consideration of mere gain, and expanding them in the direction of charity and hospitality of which St. Paul has given so delightful a description in the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. To come back to the train of ideas with which we began this series of anecdotes, a numerous class of Italians at that time, though not so fervent Catholics as a smaller and higher class among them, were still deeply impregnated with religious feeling and showed this in their lives.

## CHAPTER III

### FLORENCE

As I have mentioned, I found it impossible to go to Marseilles directly, because Asiatic cholera had been prevalent there three months before. Accordingly I went by way of Leghorn to Florence. But having no letters of introduction to any one I did not know how to obtain permission to say Mass.

I thought the best way was first to find a confessor with whom I could speak freely. But I wanted a priest who could speak French, because I did not know enough of Italian to make my confession in that language, and a confession in Latin which I had made to the Chaplain of the Leghorn Lazzeretto had not been very satisfactory. I learned with some astonishment from the landlady of my *locanda* that there was only one priest in Florence who could speak French. I was advised by her to go to a Benedictine convent of the city and to call on Father N. I have quite forgotten the name. But my visit proved a failure; the only French the good father knew were the words *Monsieur* and *oui* or *non*, with the most strange pronunciation. In this dilemma I went to the cathedral, where I hoped to find some one better posted on modern languages. I was not disappointed this time. As soon as the office was over the sexton, to whom I had said a word in bad Italian, brought me to Canon Bigeschi, who was leaving his stall before going home. I begged

of him to hear my confession, which he did immediately, and thereafter we became friends. He took me to his house, read a private letter which I gave him from the French provincial to Father Rozaven, and told me he would immediately procure for me permission to say Mass from the archbishop. If I would return in the afternoon he would give me an indefinite *celebret* and also a note for a worthy *parroco* of Florence who would allow me to say Mass in his church at any time in the forenoon, and who was the only priest in Florence who spoke French, having spent nine years in Louisiana among the Creole population. Bigeschi was then a venerable man of over sixty, but, though he belonged to the chapter of the great Duomo built by Brunelleschi, I admired the simplicity of his manners—so different from the stiffness I had remarked among the canons of Lyons in a short visit I paid to the Cathedral of Sts. Iraeneus and Pothin. Perhaps Canon Bigeschi's kindness may be explained by his friendliness to the Jesuit Order, though he was scarcely acquainted with any of its members, who at that time were excluded from Florence. He said that the Jesuits were respected by the best part of the secular clergy in Italy, and that all his friends in the capital of Tuscany were very friendly to them and were grieved to be deprived of their services in the holy ministry. The *parroco,* he added, to whom he gave me a note, was particularly well disposed to them, and I saw by the warmth with which he spoke that the services which he rendered me were a token of sincere attachment for our Order.

When the following morning I went to say Mass in the church he had selected for me I was delighted. It was one of the finest, neatest, and best ordered in the

city. I have now quite forgotten its name. The piety of the congregation, and the quiet, not to say silence, which prevailed in all the streets around made it an ideal place for my devotions. The *parroco* to whom the sexton took my note came directly from his confessional, where he was then engaged, and told the sexton always to have an altar ready for me whenever I came. The *parroco* was an even more venerable man than Canon Bigeschi. His white head, pleasant Tuscan features, and harmonious voice gave a great distinction to his person.

The following day, I received at my *locanda* of San Luigi Gonzaga a note inviting me to breakfast with the good canon the day after. He wrote that I would find him alone and he proposed to take me afterwards to see one of his best friends, who would not forgive him if he let a Jesuit come and go without visiting his house. This friend was no other than Count Broglio, Minister of Piedmont at the Court of the Grand Duke. Charles Albert was then King of Piedmont and rather well disposed to the Society of Jesus, though Piedmont and Tuscany were hostile to the Jesuits. The king saw himself obliged to choose ministers who professed to share the general prejudice against the Jesuits. It was well known at Florence that Count Broglio was a friend of the hated Order. During our conversation he spoke of nothing except this unpopularity which Gioberti soon after raised to a red heat by his *Gesuita Moderno*. He said that this anti-Jesuit fury was factitious. The majority of Florentines in his opinion did not share in this violent hatred. It was the work of a certain number of hare-brained young men and university students who considered

it a good joke to go around the streets at night, crying out *Gesuiti, no! Gesuiti, no!*, and would soon pass away like a snowstorm in the spring. Before long he hoped to see Fathers of the Society preaching in the churches of Florence, and then to have them open a college there.

A few months later Father Maximilian Ryllo, before going to Syria and Abyssinia, gave a series of sermons in Florence. The effect he produced was such that about twenty young men belonging to the best Tuscan families asked admittance into the Society. Before the end of the year I spent in Saint Andrew's I saw fifteen of them come to the novitiate, in which their sudden arrival produced quite a sensation. I remember how jubilant good Father Maurizi, then master of novices, was when he saw the swarm of new bees which had found its way to his hive. Few of them, it is true, remained, but there had been at least a great commotion produced by the hope that Tuscany would not long remain closed to our efforts for the good of Italy.

But in spite of this favorable turn of affairs Count Broglio's dream was never realized. The opposition to the Jesuits was deeper and more ardent than he thought. The secret societies, of which he did not say a word, had issued a decree that the Jesuits should not return to Tuscany and that, moreover, they should be deprived of their educational institutions throughout Italy.

After some conversation with me Count Broglio turned towards his friend, the canon, and began to ask about several of their mutual acquaintances. I remarked that these were all Padri Filippini, and the two gentlemen spoke of them with the greatest respect

and affection. On going out, therefore, I expressed a wish to be introduced to some of them. "I intended to do so," Bigeschi replied, "but before I take you to them, the best friends of your Order in Florence, no doubt you wish to see the *parroco* of the church where you say Mass in his own house." "It will be a great pleasure," I replied; "I intended from the beginning to ask you his address; but our spirited conversation has always distracted me. Please tell me at what time and at what place I can meet him." "I shall not do so," he said, "because a note from him has been handed me this morning, asking me to dine with him to-morrow at one o'clock and he wants me to take you as a companion. In case you called at his house you would not find him because now he is giving the annual retreat to the pupils of the archiepiscopal seminary. He cannot be seen except late at night. But he has arranged matters so that he can give us our dinner to-morrow." I was delighted with the kind attention I met with everywhere. I doubt very much if French ecclesiastics with all their usual courtesy would have carried kindness and good-nature so far.

The dinner with the *parroco* was a quiet affair and I felt as much at home as if I had been taking my dinner with the curé of St. Clement at Nantes. On my account the conversation was carried on in French, as had been the case with Count Broglio, though this time the venerable Tuscan priest did not speak my native language, but he said he understood it, and I replied that I understood Italian. Thus we did not remain silent at table. I had to speak nearly the whole time, because the two old gentlemen wished to know what I thought of the state of religion in France. My

ideas on the subject at that time are known to the reader. I drew a very gloomy sketch, indeed, of the universal skepticism prevailing there, and of the almost total absence of men from the churches in all large cities. I particularly quoted the fact of the absolute neglect of the paschal duty on the part of the men, and could tell them how I had personally ascertained that the number of communicants in Nantes during the previous Easter-time had not amounted to more than one hundred men or boys all told, though that city contained over 90,000 inhabitants, and had the reputation of being one of the most religious cities in France.

I remember that at this moment our venerable host raised his eyes and hands toward heaven and exclaimed, "Is there any hope for your poor country?" "Yes, Sir," I replied, "because the women are pious and the clergy are excellent." I said in a few words that the female portion of the population were perhaps the best women on earth, and exerted themselves with great prudence and zeal in reclaiming their husbands when that was possible, and in preserving the innocence of their children as long as their influence lasted in the family. But I chiefly relied for the good of religion in France on its learned and zealous clergy. Their heroic exertions, I was sure, would finally be crowned with success, and bring back to the Church a great number of men who appeared to share in the universal indifference, though in fact their conscience was not dead, as many showed at the moment of death.

I attributed the prevailing merits of the clergymen to the training they received, particularly from the Sulpicians, among whom I myself had resided for

five years for my studies of philosophy and theology. The discipline of their houses, I said, would appear strange to Italians, who feel rather inclined to allow young men preparing for the priesthood to mingle with the world and to associate with many lay companions outside of the seminary. In countries still Catholic to the core this freedom granted to ecclesiastical students might have its advantages, but in France, where outside of the Church the influence of Catholicity has nearly disappeared, the Sulpician system appears to me the only one which is safe. The exclusion of the seminarian from the world is such that, except during the three months of vacation, he never sets his foot out of the precincts of the house except when he is sick. During the five years of my training I never went home outside of vacation time except on New Year's Day, and very few of us received even this insignificant privilege. During vacation, moreover, the greatest number of seminarists in France were protected from moral harm by spending most of their time in some priest's house, and there could be no more safe refuge for any young man than under the wing of a country curate, however strange this assertion may appear in other countries.

At first the two old gentlemen with whom I was dining appeared to have little faith in the effect of this training, and they seemed almost ready to exclaim, as good Father Maurizi once did to me when I was speaking on the same subject: "How can a priest educated altogether out of the world obtain any influence over the world which does not know him, and which he himself does not know?"

"The way they are trained," I answered, "is the

best suited to give them directly some influence over worldly men who do not practice their religion, though in their hearts there is still some respect for it. The spectacle of the pious and secluded life of the clergy is best calculated to attract their confidence whenever some circumstance in their checquered and morally wretched life prompts them to reflect a moment on the many reasons they have to return to God in whom they still believe. In case they saw in the clergy any sign of worldly character, or the least appearance of ill-regulated conduct, they would never think of going to them for advice and consolation. It is only the relatively small number of those men that have entirely lost their faith and profoundly despise religion, who hate the priests on account of their unworldly and secluded habits. The others admire them in their hearts because they see that their conduct is in harmony with what they preach. They never see them partaking of the pleasures of this world, and they conclude that they can find safe guides among them whenever the voice of their conscience cannot be stifled any longer, and they determine at last to return to the God of their childhood."

These reflections seemed to make a deep impression on the venerable *parroco*, who said that in fact he would wish the young candidates for the priesthood to receive a more strict training in Italy than was usually the case. He was at the time preaching the annual retreat to the priests of Florence and whenever he saw them before him listening to his words he was struck by the levity of many of them. He added, in conclusion, that in case a revolution broke out in Italy, as there was every prospect at that time, he

was afraid that the clergy would not be prepared for its duties in the midst of such a trial, and that much scandal would be given to the people. In this, however, his fears came from his deep sense of the self-sacrifice required of the ministers of God on such an occasion. The revolution has come at last; the Italian clergy, both regular and secular, have been sorely tried, and thank God, with very few exceptions, they have shown their faith and have given new proofs of it every day (1881).

The day after Canon Bigeschi fulfilled his promise to introduce me to some of his friends among the Padri Filippini, and this was the first occasion I had to become acquainted with them and to compare them with the old Oratorians in France as they were known to me.

It is surprising that no house of the Oratory was opened in Florence during the life of St. Philip, though he himself was a Florentine. During the century that followed, the Order did not settle there. From the beginning of this century, however, and probably for a much longer time, such a house had existed, and it was there that Canon Bigeschi used to go whenever he needed relaxation, and he did not seem to enjoy any pleasure as much as the company of these good and refined gentlemen. One day, breakfasting with him, I happened to mention the pleasure I felt looking at some of the masterpieces of Raphael and Carlo Dolce which I had seen the day before in the celebrated galleries of the Palazzo Pitti. When I asked his opinion of these paintings he astonished me when he replied that he had never been to see that collection. He had many times intended to go, but never did; he hoped

he would not die before doing so. And remember that he was born in Florence and had there spent all his life except the nine years he was in Louisiana. Still he was far from being a Puritan or a Jansenist; his pleasant little parlor was full of objects of art given him by his friends, and on the mantelpiece I remember to have seen two miniature copies of the "Group of the Graces" like that still in the Piccolomini Chapel of the Cathedral of Siena.

When we arrived at the house of the Oratory, Canon Bigeschi went with me to the room of the superior, whom we found talking with two or three of his brethren. My name and the object of my visit were given, a seat was offered me and I found myself in the midst of friends indeed. They spoke Italian, which I could follow. I spoke French, of course, which Canon Bigeschi translated for me when there was need of it, which was seldom the case. I began telling them that this visit was of great interest to me, as I had never had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with their Order. The scheme of the Florentine saint, he said, embraced all classes of society, not excepting the students in colleges who lived with their families. Philip loved to be in the midst of young men who were pursuing their studies, but he did not wish that his disciples should teach them the classics or scholastic philosophy. He received them in the church every day, if possible, for religious exercises, and during Advent and Lent not only to prepare them for the reception of the Sacraments, but also to initiate them in public speaking on religious subjects, that they might act as apostles for other young men. He wished to make the churches pleasing to them by adorning

them with the masterpieces of fine art of which the Italians are so fond. Not only were his churches artistically built and decorated, but music of a high order often came to the help of devotion. He was the first to introduce the Oratorio, and these compositions received their name from the churches of the Oratory.

All classes, the high and the low, the noble and the simple, the educated and the plebeian, received the attention of the zealous Oratorians and their founder. Hearing confessions, giving missions in town and country, visiting and helping the poor, converting sinners, guiding the good to perfection, all the labors of a truly apostolic life kept the Filippini employed.

In 1837 I had spent two years in Rome, and had become acquainted with members of various religious Orders, as will appear from the following pages. At that time fortune again threw me in the way of the Filippini or Oratorians.

The Asiatic cholera visited Rome for the first time in August of that year. It had raged here and there over Europe from 1832. During the spring and summer of 1837 it had carried off many victims in Germany and France, I think; and the fear of its invading Rome grew more and more intense among the people. The Holy Father, Gregory XVI, asked for the prayers of the faithful to avert the scourge. A solemn procession was to take place on the fifteenth of August, and the image of Mary, painted it is believed by St. Luke, was to be carried with great pomp from the Basilica of St. Mary Major, where it is generally kept, to the church of the Gesú. The people were invited to go to this church during nine days to pray and hear the

word of God preparatory to the purification of their hearts by the reception of the Holy Eucharist. I was present at this procession in which the Jesuits took part contrary to custom. The Pope carried the miraculous picture, and our Father-General, Roothaan, with his assistants walked on both sides of the magnificent *baldacchino*. I seldom saw anything more impressive.

Still the cholera came, and the governor of Rome asked our Fathers to furnish young priests to assist the sick and the dying. I never had any fear of the cholera, which I had seen in Nantes in 1832 and 1835, and I asked Father Benetti, the rector of the Roman College, to send me wherever he wished. The *Carceri Nuove*, a large penitentiary containing twelve hundred convicted criminals, was my first mission, which lasted only a week. From the *Carceri Nuove* I was sent to one of the Roman parishes. The parish-priest had written to Father Benetti to send him two of us, because he himself was too old and infirm to go out of the house, and, in fact, he had previously obtained permission from the Cardinal-Vicar to say his Mass in a private chapel in his own apartments, except on Sundays. His curate, the only one he had, had felt panic-stricken by the arrival of the cholera and had disappeared from Rome. We went to receive the orders of the old parish-priest and were delighted with his good nature, simplicity, and true devotion to his duty. By his advice we took our station during the day in the sacristy of the celebrated church of San Giovanni de' Fiorentini, which was quite near and where the people could more easily call on us. At night we were to sleep in the house of the Filippini adjacent to the

*Chiesa Nuova* situated in the neighborhood. In this way I made the acquaintance of the Roman Oratorians.

The Church of San Giovanni de' Fiorentini was one of the first scenes of St. Philip's zeal, even before the *Chiesa Nuova,* the most renowned Oratory of the Filippini, was built on the site of the old church of Santa Maria in Vallicella. It is said that the Florentine residents of Rome offered this church to St. Philip as a proof of their admiration for their holy fellow citizen. Near San Giovanni, St. Philip settled his fellow laborers who had until that time exercised their ministry in San Girolamo della Caritá. The church itself is rich in splendid paintings and admirable statuary. The Filippini occupied it until *Chiesa Nuova* was built for their own use. My companion and I spent the whole week in the sacristy of San Giovanni and were not idle, for people came from all sides to call us. But every evening we went to the house of the Filippini to spend the night, and we were seldom disturbed after we had retired to the home of the Oratorians. Consequently we spent two or three hours every evening in their company, and became acquainted with their way of life. The magnificent church called *Chiesa Nuova* was usually full of people who came to attend the exercises of the Oratory, and we saw the good done among all classes of society by the disciples of St. Philip in Rome. To describe their community life would require long details. I prefer quoting a few paragraphs of a short abstract of it left us by A. Theiner in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique:*

" No new member can be admitted into the society unless he is already in orders or just before being ordained, and all have to pay their personal expenses

except during sickness. They do not pronounce any vow and can leave the Institute when they choose, taking back the property they brought with them. Still in spite of this liberty it seldom happens that any of them leaves the Congregation.

"The form of government is democratic. The superior, first in point of dignity, is otherwise the equal of his brethren. He must fulfill all the functions of the holy ministry, such as preaching, hearing confessions, etc., according to the regular order. Even at the age of eighty he must serve at table in his turn, as do all the others, because the service in the refectory is done by the Fathers, and not by lay Brothers as in other Congregations. Sickness alone is an excuse. Silence is observed during meals, and talking is never allowed, not even on the feast of the founder, when cardinals, archbishops, prelates, princes, and noblemen are invited. This strict rule of silence, as rigorous as that of the Carthusians, is, however, mitigated by permitting the solution of cases of conscience during meals, a custom which St. Philip introduced and which is continued to the present day. This practice, however, is rather a pious and instructive conversation than a learned discussion. The authors quoted in proof by the Father who gives the solution must be approved by the Holy See such as in exegesis, Calmet, Maldonatus, Menochius, Cornelius à Lapide; in moral theology, St. Alphonsus Ligorio, Suarez, Bellarmine, Voigt, Antoine, St. Thomas Aquinas. . . .

"The legislative power resides in the Congregation. It can require an account from the superior, depose him, reinstate him, without the concurrence of any superior ecclesiastical authority. . . . The bishop is, it is true,

the immediate superior of the Order in each diocese, but he can never command its members to do anything which is not in accordance with the scope of the Institute, of which he is only the guardian.

"The various houses of the Oratory are independent of each other, and there is no general superior, etc."

To these liberal rules Augustine Theiner attributes the tender affection felt for their Order by Italian Oratorians. In my opinion it is mainly ascribed to the spirit of deep piety fostered in them, not only by their personal acts of devotion, but also by the exterior practice of all apostolic functions in which they are constantly engaged.

Though during the week I spent with them I found them generally busy till late in the evening, I had several opportunities to converse with them on the state of society in Italy. They noticed with sorrow that there were large classes of Italians who never came near them, though they were never abused by the most rabid radicals. There was no outcry against the Filippini, as was then the case in many places in Italy against the Jesuits, and their pious exercises were followed mainly by the nobility and the artisans. Of the numerous middle class they saw a very limited number among their audiences, and the neglect of religion was becoming sensible among those chiefly who had received a superficial education in the schools of Rome. These schools, no doubt, were in excellent hands, but the young men who spent a few years in them were soon filled with political aspirations hurtful to their faith and their piety. As soon as they heard of liberalism in other countries they wished to be liberal in their own, and this new feeling awakened in

them a restless spirit which threw them into the whirlpool of agitation.

The evil, however, had not yet gone very far, and the danger might have been averted if the sources of temptation had not been so abundant everywhere. The Filippini did all they could to stem the evil; and to their efforts in great part was due the fact that the Roman churches still contained as many men as women, whilst in France the men had almost entirely disappeared.

## CHAPTER IV

### MY FIRST EXPERIENCES IN ROME

Vaures was born of very poor parents somewhere in Auvergne. It was the custom in that province for poor people to hire out their little boys from the age of eight to twelve to travelling agents who carried on a curious business. Each of these men with three or four boys scoured the western part of France, at least the cities, to sell rabbit skins (*peaux de lapins*), and to sweep the chimneys of the towns. The little fellows, all black with soot, armed with an iron scraper, climbed inside of the flue to the very top where they sang a little ditty for the amusement of the public. After they had passed up and down, the flue was as clean as if it were new, and a few *sous* was the compensation. I suppose that by this time the custom has passed away, and that now the little Auvergnat chimney-sweeps do not visit Nantes as they did in my time.

This was Vaures' first experience in life, which led to his climbing much higher than the highest chimney in Nantes. In that city there were compassionate souls, Christian ladies chiefly, who felt impelled to take care of these poor ignorant waifs. A society had been formed among them to call the boys together on Sundays in order to instruct them for their First Communion, to clothe them, and to feast them on that day. Little Vaures was so bright that some of the ladies thought he was not made for sweeping

chimneys. One of them took him home, sent him to school, and afterwards to the *Petit Séminaire* where, I remember well, he always took the first prizes in all his classes. As he wished to become a priest he was afterwards sent to the *Grand Séminaire* and duly went through his courses of philosophy and theology. This happened a few years before I went there, but I became well acquainted with him when he came back to the Seminary to teach a class previous to his ordination.

He received all the Orders but the priesthood when a strange thing occurred. We heard during the vacation that Vaures would not return, and that he was going to teach a class in the *Petit Séminaire* of St. Jean d'Angely in the Diocese of Luçon, I think. This news struck all of us with dismay, because the young deacon was a great favorite with everybody. He was always cheerful, sociable, ready to oblige, apparently quite fond of the place where Providence had placed him, and was destined to be most useful to the Church in whatever capacity he might be employed.

Soon strange rumors were spread, and it was said that the Sulpicians were the cause of his troubles. These gentlemen directed the *Grand Séminaire* of Nantes, and on their decision mainly depended the ordination of the candidates for the priesthood. It was reported that at the last moment they had told the bishop that young Vaures, already a deacon, was not fit to be a priest. How was this possible?

The Sulpicians have perhaps done more for the proper education of the clergy in France than any other body of men. In my candid opinion, if the French clergy is so eminent for virtue, true ecclesiastical spirit, disinterestedness, zeal, etc., this is due

chiefly to the Sulpicians. I have always thanked God that I spent five years of my youth under their gentle but firm guidance. M. de Courson particularly, one of them, I have always regarded as a saint, and I would consider it the height of ingratitude on my part to speak ill of my old teachers.

Still when I fully understood the case of Vaures I could not but think a mistake had been made, but I kept my opinion to myself. Everybody is liable to blunder, and the most holy and well-intentioned man in the world can make a mistake. To attribute to them any unworthy motive in the present case would be a great injustice. In deciding such cases they had in view only the glory of God and the good of the Church, and in voting against Vaures they certainly followed their conscience.

But what had happened to make them take this stand in Vaures' case? I may not know all the facts and perhaps they had information which I never learned. I can only relate the story as current among us. During vacation Vaures resided at the home of the lady who had so far defrayed the expenses of his education. The family, as usual with people of the higher classes of society, spent the greater part of the year at their country-seat. Here there was a constant round of useful occupations, visits among friends, and innocent amusements. They often went fishing and boating on a river which flowed passed the end of their park. If I mistake not it was the Erdre, of which I have already spoken several times. On one occasion the boat was full of young ladies and young gentlemen, all intimate friends of the family. Vaures was always treated as a child of the house. The day was extremely

sultry, and the young men of the party had naturally divested themselves of their outer dress, and were rowing comfortably in their shirt-sleeves.

Vaures was encumbered with his cassock, which he never took off, as it would have been considered among seminarians and clergymen a great want of decorum to do so. Finally he could stand it no longer. The young men probably told him that he was a fool to remain as he was with the perspiration running from all the pores of his body, in the midst of friends whom he might look upon as his brothers and sisters. At last he took off his cassock, thinking that this would never go beyond the circle of which he was one. But he was mistaken; the gentlemen of the *Grand Séminaire* heard of it; and this, it was said, became the cause of his ostracism. I am not satisfied that this is the entire story. Perhaps the incident was only the occasion for taking a step which they had determined upon already for other reasons. In my time such an incident would have been considered sufficient reason for exclusion from Holy Orders.

Another bishop, however, consented to receive Vaures in his diocese, and this proves that he had not been considered guilty of anything very serious. But after a year passed in the *Petit Séminaire* of St. Jean d'Angely he became thoroughly dissatisfied with his situation and made up his mind to go straight to Rome where, probably, he thought that his natural joviality and pleasant address would not be a bar to preferment.

When he arrived in the Holy City M. de Chateaubriand was French Ambassador. What emboldened Vaures to apply to M. de Chateaubriand I never learned. I suppose his noble patrons in Nantes, who always

remained his fast friends, may have given him letters of introduction. The great French writer and statesman received him with extreme kindness—I have this from Vaures himself—and after having heard his story told him with great bluntness: "My good friend, a stranger to succeed in Rome must become a religious; no office is given to a secular clergyman unless he is an Italian, and I do not blame the ecclesiastical authorities for this. Think of what would become of an Italian *abbate* in France should he apply for a rectorship or even a lower position in any diocese?"

This at first staggered young Vaures, who had never thought of the religious state, and I presume had never felt any inclination for it. But after seriously reflecting on the ambassador's remark he concluded that he was right. He, therefore, began to look around him. He had some money and could spend a few weeks and even months without asking anybody for aid. I have heard, but not from him, that he first applied to be admitted into the Society of Jesus. If he did so it showed that he sincerely wished to lead a good life and I have no doubt that he was at all times determined to do so. He could not, however, be received for several reasons. Though unsuccessful, I had personal proofs that he always felt esteem and respect for the Society. After some time he made up his mind to present himself to the General-Superior of the Conventuals. This is the same order to which Cardinal Ganganelli (Clement XIV) belonged. That branch of the Franciscan Order, known formerly in France under the name of *Cordeliers*, traced back its existence to the very time of St. Francis. Soon after the latter's death a number of houses introduced a less strict

practice of poverty. First this appeared only in the form of their property, that is, they built finer convents, more commodious cells for the religious, and, chiefly, handsomer churches. Gradually this spirit of mitigation was extended to individual members of the community, who were allowed the private use of their income when they received money for their preaching or teaching. These religious, called Conventuals, at last formed a body differing greatly from the principal branch of the Order, to which the name of *Patres Observantiae* was given. Finally the custom was introduced among them to receive a general dispensation of the vow of poverty the very day they pronounced it.

As was said previously, the date when this took place is not known. But it is certain that when Cardinal Ximenes in Spain attempted to bring all the Franciscans to the observance of the same rule he failed with regard to the Conventuals. Leo X at last issued a Bull by which they were authorized to keep the name Conventuals, which the popular voice had given them, and he appointed a special general for that branch of Franciscans canonically authorizing them to use their personal property. Instead of increasing their number and their influence over the people, this privilege gradually lowered their standing as compared with the Observants. It has always been remarked that the greater the austerity of a religious Congregation the more postulants ask to be admitted. When I was in Rome the Capuchins were more numerous and more influential than all the other branches of Franciscans put together, and everybody said that this was due to the austerity of their life and particularly to their extreme strictness in point of poverty.

Under Clement XIV the Conventuals possessed scarcely any influence, though he himself had belonged to that Order. When by the suppression of the Society of Jesus its colleges were left without instructors the Conventuals, who had never been employed in teaching, did not obtain the direction of any of them, but there were two institutions confided previously to the suppressed Order, which could be intrusted to them. These were the two stations for hearing the confessions of the pilgrims, the one at the Basilica of St. Peter at Rome and the other at the Holy House of Loretto. The Jesuits had been entrusted with both and they were important houses on account of the great number of visitors speaking a variety of languages who came there either as pilgrims or as tourists. The Conventuals had houses in all parts of Catholic Europe which could furnish confessors speaking various languages. They were accordingly selected to take the place of the Jesuits and fulfilled their duties so well that when the Society of Jesus was restored by Pius VII the Conventuals retained these positions at Rome and Loretto.

Since the suppression of the *Cordeliers* in France by the Revolution, however, it had been found difficult to appoint a French penitentiary at the Vatican, which is visited by so many Frenchmen every year. The arrival of M. Vaures was, therefore, a Godsend to the superiors of the Conventuals and soon after he had finished his novitiate he was appointed French penitentiary at Rome. A better man could not have been chosen. He knew his theology well and was a man of moderate temper. His work, however, was not confined to the relatively small number of Frenchmen who

received the Sacraments while at Rome, but as the penitentiaries had faculties to absolve from reserved cases, which are very numerous in Italy, many Romans, chiefly of the lower orders, applied to them to be reconciled with God. I have witnessed this myself on more than one occasion.

But duties of a very different kind were also confided to Vaures, which he did not neglect and which became the cause of his extraordinary promotion. He was often called upon to receive French visitors of the highest social rank. They came to him in crowds at certain seasons of the year, chiefly Christmas and Easter. He made himself very useful to them, directing them in their rambles through the city for the purpose of looking at the monuments of classic times and of Christian antiquity; or of indicating to them the best collections of modern painting and sculpture. Sometimes he obtained for them the privilege of assisting at the great ceremonies at St. Peter's, St. John Lateran, the Sistine Chapel, etc. Often Father Vaures accompanied them when visiting the great charitable and educational establishments of the city, so remarkable at the time under the patronage of the Popes. The most prominent of the French strangers were introduced to the best Roman society either through the direct or indirect influence of the humble Conventual. Finally many French visitors desired to pay their homage to the Holy Father and no one had better opportunities to obtain this privilege for them than Father Vaures. This made him well known at the Vatican and in fact he became quite a favorite of Gregory XVI, who finally honored him with his confidence.

It was said that more than once Gregory had chosen

him for his confessor. Though this may have been mere gossip, it is certain that the Pope often gave him proofs of his sincere affection; as this was no secret, little Vaures became quite an influential man in Rome. He had no enemy; all were his friends. Every door was open to him. But he had the good sense never to abuse his privileges or to ask for anything except what every one was ready to grant. To prove it, it was said that it was in his power to secure from the Pope high ecclesiastical dignities for his friends, even bishoprics. Every one in my time thought that he would be raised to the episcopal dignity. No one would have been surprised at it and most men would have been delighted, because he was a universal favorite. Still this never happened because the good man never took any steps to obtain this honor; and he was still an humble Franciscan when Gregory XVI died. Under Gregory's successor, Pius IX, Father Vaures, for reasons unknown to me, sank into obscurity. Still the favor of Gregory XVI is sufficient proof that Father Vaures was a man of unusual qualities of mind and heart.

I shall now briefly give an account of my own relations to Father Vaures. After his departure from Nantes I did not correspond with him, but as soon as it was decided that I should go to Rome and enter the novitiate of St. Andrea I thought of him. I wrote him a long letter a month or two before I started, and begged of him to indicate to me some convenient hotel or *locanda* in Florence, where I intended to stop a few days, and also in Rome. It was not my intention to present myself immediately after my arrival at Rome to the Very Reverend Father-General, as I meant first to

visit some sanctuaries for which I had conceived a great devotion. I wished above all to say my first Mass in the Holy City at the subterranean altar beneath which the remains of St. Peter repose. I shrank from asking my future superiors to obtain this favor for me and yet without some one to introduce me it would have been impossible to obtain it. I had heard of the remarkable position of Father Vaures in Rome and knew that if he could procure me this privilege he would readily do so. His answer came in due time; he told me to let him know the day of my arrival at Rome; on the following morning, at any hour that would suit me, I would find everything ready in the sacristy of St. Peter's so that I might say Mass there. I replied in a short note that I was about to leave Nantes and would write again from Florence. From that city, where I was obliged to remain twelve days, I wrote to my friend informing him that I would arrive in Rome at four or five o'clock on the afternoon of November 24th. I stated that my intention was to go directly to his convent and have a long talk with him. The good man did more than I expected; I found him waiting for me on the Piazza del Popolo and we walked together along the Corso, then through the Borgo to the unpretentious monastery where he lived. This was the residence of the community of Conventuals who were appointed to hear confessions in St. Peter's, and it was quite convenient to the great square which leads up to St. Peter's. The monastery itself was very modest in appearance and when Father Vaures opened his room I was highly pleased to see that it was the neat but poor apartment of an humble monk. I remarked throughout Italy that in general the convents, even

the largest and most beautiful structures, are made up of cells often very small and always simple, which impress the visitor with the feeling that their occupants not only profess to be poor and humble but are so in truth. Many Conventuals could make themselves very comfortable, since they are allowed to possess property in their own name and their rooms might with their own means be made attractive little apartments artistically adorned. But this is never the case. Though exempt from the vow of poverty they never occupy apartments of their own, arranged in their own fashion and agreeably to their taste. They live in community and lead a common life. They must even take their meals in the common refectory, only they can procure special dishes by paying the cook for them. However, in many monasteries even stricter than those of the Conventuals the monks are allowed to take breakfast in their rooms, and this consists always of a cup of chocolate and an egg or a piece of cheese.

I still remember with pleasure a little incident that happened to me when with a Jesuit companion I made a short pilgrimage to the *Sacro Speco* of St. Benedict at Subiaco. When after our Mass we were making our thanksgiving in the subterranean church which had been a cave sanctified by the austerities of the holy patriarch, an old monk walking softly came behind us and said in a whisper that when we had finished he would take us to his room. We soon followed him and when he opened his cell I saw that it was like that of Father Vaures. Still Subiaco is one of the most remarkable Bendictine convents, being the holy cradle of the Order, and its architecture far surpasses

that of the small Franciscan monastery near the Piazza San Pietro.

The good old monk after telling us how pleased he was to have stolen us away from the common table in the great refectory opened a small cupboard in one of the angles of the room, and to our surprise exposed a pretty large tin cooking apparatus, in which two spirit lamps were keeping the chocolate warm and cooking half a dozen fresh eggs. "You have, I know, nothing of the kind, Reverend Fathers," he said, "in your houses; but be not scandalized. I break no rule in offering you this simple fare and I hope you will show yourselves good children of St. Benedict on this occasion." Then placing in the middle of the apartment a table large enough for three, and furnishing it with plates, knives and forks, he made us sit with him, and began to relate interesting stories concerning the holy spot we had come to visit.

After a long talk in Father Vaures' cell about old times in Nantes, which more than once brought tears to his eyes, he accompanied me on my first visit to St. Peter's. I contented myself with praying a short time before the celebrated "Confession." He then showed me the way to the sacristy, told me it was useless to go thither now as the proper official was not present at that hour, but the following morning at the appointed hour I would find everything ready for my Mass.

I found everything prepared and met with none of the difficulties I encountered in Leghorn and Florence. Without asking me for any paper from my diocese the person in charge appeared happy to furnish me with everything needed. He treated me, in fact, as if I

were a person of distinction, ordered the two little choir boys who were to serve my Mass to attend to my wants in the crypt and see to it that I had light enough to say Mass in comfort. What a happy hour I spent there! And all this I owed to Father Vaures. I had been permitted to offer the Holy Sacrifice at the Sepulchre of the Prince of the Apostles, on the very spot hallowed by the blood of the first Christian martyrs in Rome. I had dismissed the little choir boys directly after my Mass, telling them to put out the lights except that of the lamps which are always kept burning, and begging of them to tell the prelate in the sacristy that I would come out a little later. When I returned I found this excellent gentleman, who smiled and asked me if I was satisfied, or whether I wished to see more of the crypt or of the treasures of the church. I could not but express my sincere thanks for the great favor he had done me, and said that I hoped to have the privilege of repeating my visit and hoped to view the other noteworthy objects under his care in company with Father Vaures.

Then I called on this good friend for a moment, and showed him my joy at the privileges which he had procured for me. "This is a trifle," he said. "You, no doubt, wish to see the Holy Father, and since you intend to stay in the city for a short time can you come with me to the Vatican to-day or to-morrow? I can easily arrange the audience to your complete satisfaction." This, I confess, was a great temptation for me. But a moment's reflection convinced me that it was not proper. I therefore replied: "You overwhelm me with your kind attentions. But I leave it to you to decide. Is it not better that I should be presented

to the Holy Father under the garb which I will assume in a few days? It will be a great happiness for me to receive the Pope's blessing at any time. But is it not more becoming that some of the Fathers who have already adopted me should be my sponsors? Tell me what you think of it yourself, dear friend." "You are right," he said, "and I shall not urge my proposal."

The morning of the day on which I was to begin my novitiate I went to see the good Franciscan again to bid him good-bye. At the convent the porter told me that he was in the church hearing confessions; and going to his box, the place of which was known to me, I saw with satisfaction that there was only one person with him. I waited for a moment, and he came out to meet me. As he was obliged by his office to remain at his post during a certain time he could not take me to his house, and thus the conversation was very short. I told him that as long as I remained a novice I could not have the pleasure of seeing him often; but as I was, according to present arrangements, to remain in the city twelve months longer, probably in the Roman College, I would then have the pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with him.

So in fact it happened. Though in the novitiate we were allowed to take an hour's walk in the afternoon, I never met him in my rambles. But soon after entering the Roman College for my fourth year of theology a very strange incident brought me again in contact with Father Vaures, and now I could become better acquainted with the peculiar rules followed in the Conventual Order.

One day when I was going out for my usual walk a young man whom I had known in Nantes, and who

had been one of my pupils in the *Petit Séminaire*, rushed up to me saying: "My dear sir, allow me to have a word with you." I recognized him at once, but as his excitement indicated that his conversation would be long, having with me a Jesuit companion, as is usual, I told the young man at what hour, on the following day, he could see me and bade him good-bye. He was punctual and related his strange story. After finishing his classical studies in the *Petit Séminaire* he had gone through his philosophy and theology and expected to be ordained, when the Sulpicians refused to sanction this last step. He was not yet in Holy Orders and was consequently obliged to fulfill his duty as a conscript. This was the law under Louis Philippe. The poor young man was struck with dismay, for he did not feel the least inclination for military life. He resolved on taking a bold step. He fled from France without a passport and reached Rome in safety with money enough to keep him for a few days. So it happened that he met me. Had I thought him unfit for the priesthood I should have declined to do anything to enable him to finish his studies in Rome. But though he was not a genius and was very far from possessing the qualities of my Conventual friend, still from what I knew of him I thought he would make a good priest and I was willing to serve him.

Unknown in Rome, where I was busy preparing myself for an important examination on the whole of philosophy and theology, I had but little time and means to seek favor for the young man. He had told me that he had no inclination to become a religious but wished to become a secular priest. Under the circumstances it struck me that Father Vaures was the

CARDINAL JOSEPH FESCH

FROM THE PAINTING BY JEROME MAGLIOLI

man to help him. I therefore wrote him a letter which I handed to the young man. Father Vaures immediately called on me. "I am astonished," he said, "that you ask for my aid when you may achieve your end without any one's assistance and without difficulty. Go to Cardinal Fesch. I am sure that on your recommendation he will take this poor fellow into his house, give him some work, and leave him plenty of time to finish his studies either in the Roman College or at the Sapienza."

"You are joking, Father," I replied; "Cardinal Fesch knows nothing of me, and besides I understand that he is not our friend and my Jesuit habit will be the best means of defeating our purpose." "You are mistaken," he answered; "your Fathers imagine the Cardinal is opposed to your Order; but they are wrong. I have proofs that he is your friend, but through shyness you give him no chance to show it. Go to him boldly and you will find him ready to oblige you, for he sincerely wishes to be on good terms with the Jesuit Fathers. Though he does not dislike me, I feel that you can do better than I."

These words astonished me, I confess, and, as I could not believe that the good Conventual wished to play a trick on me, I determined to try my luck. The Rector of the Roman College, Father Benetti, to whom I went to report the whole affair, was even more surprised than I was. "Would you have any objection," he asked me, "to try your luck? Would you be afraid of attempting so bold an undertaking?" "Not in the least," I replied. "The Cardinal cannot dislike us so bitterly as to insult me and thrust me out of his house. The worst he can do is to receive me coldly and oblige

me to withdraw without obtaining what I wish for my protégé. I should be pleased to make the experiment." "Go, my friend," said the Rector, "you have my blessing. Our Fathers, particularly Father-General, will be highly pleased to know that the Cardinal is friendly to us. Take with you as companion, not an ordinary brother, but a scholastic to show our respect for a prince of the Church."

In answer to a note from me to His Eminence asking when he could grant me an interview, he replied by the bearer, that he would see me the very afternoon of that day at any hour convenient to me. This was a good sign; and a little before four o'clock I was at his palace, and he received me immediately. I had heard and read a great deal of him, but I scarcely expected to meet with so diminutive a man, for he was even less tall than I was myself. Born in 1763, he was then seventy-four years of age and looked indeed old and infirm. In fact, he died a few years later. But when I saw him he looked quite vigorous. I apologized for the liberty I took of calling on him to ask him for a favor. He smiled and said that he was glad that I called on him; he would have sooner shown his friendly feeling for our Society if he had found an occasion for it. I directly related the story of the young man who interested me. "I recognized," said I, "that to ask Your Eminence to receive this young man into your household may appear somewhat bold and forward; but I have been emboldened to do so by a friend of mine who told me that you are always ready to assist a Frenchman in distress." He forthwith consented to my request; and the conditions which he proposed were far more favorable than I had expected. My

young friend was to have his board and lodging in his house; he would have full liberty to follow the course of theology at the Roman College; and would receive eight *scudi* a month for his personal expenses. The only thing the Cardinal required of him was to act as secretary for his French correspondence.

I heard later from my young friend that the only service he was asked to do for the Cardinal was to write a single unimportant French letter. The Cardinal evidently desired to give the Jesuits some evidence of his good will. When I reported the result of my visit to Father Benetti, he appeared astonished, and when the story became known to the Fathers of the Roman College and to the Gesu, I received high compliments from several of them, particularly, I remember, from Father Perrone, who attributed my success to my diplomatic ability. Of course, I declined the compliment and ascribed my success to the Cardinal's friendly feelings for the Society. When I was leaving, the Cardinal requested me to suggest to my young friend that his house was not a safe refuge for him in case his whereabouts in Rome became known to the French police. His words were: "Louis Philippe would find it a pleasant joke to oblige him to give up to the French Ambassador a French refugee living in his house."

The mistaken ideas of our Fathers respecting Cardinal Fesch are easily explained by the general misconception of his character. As long as he lived, his reputation was far below his worth; and it is only after his death that he began to gain in public estimation the respect he deserved. He had the misfortune of being closely connected with Napoleon I, for he was the half-brother

of Letitia Ramolino, the mother of the great man. Uncle of the French Emperor and ordained a priest before the French Revolution, in 1785, I think he had ecclesiastical honors showered upon him, but on condition that he would be of service to his nephew, and this Napoleon took to mean that Fesch would be his tool. People in general thought that he was, but this was an injustice to the man. No doubt amidst the splendors of the Empire, seeing the great conqueror master of Europe, and his other nephews and nieces kings or queens, feeling naturally as being one of the family, he was interested in the incredible elevation of the Bonapartes and appeared to be animated with the same extraordinary ambition.

He would have been more than human not to yield on some occasions to the alluring phantasm of glory which encircled his name and his race. Any one carefully reading that stupendous history will find that these occasions of momentary weakness were in the case of Fesch less marked and never implied a complete denial of conscience. As soon as he saw clearly that what was asked of him was opposed to religion and right, he was firm in refusing compliance; so that at the end of the great Napoleon's career he was in open disgrace with his despotic nephew. His conduct, particularly at the pretended Council of Paris in 1811, and in general whenever the rights of the Holy See were attacked, was admirable, and on those occasions he remembered the oath he took when he was made a Cardinal. The only serious objection to this view regards the divorce of Napoleon with Josephine. Still even here Fesch's share in the transaction consisted only in testifying to the marriage ceremony which preceded the coronation

of Napoleon and Josephine by Pius VII—a ceremony performed at night in the Tuileries by Cardinal Fesch himself at the request of the Pope, who gave him all his own powers for that occasion—though neither the parish priest nor the witnesses required by the Council of Trent for a legitimate union between Catholics was present. On account of this deficiency the ecclesiastical court declared the nullity of the marriage. Cardinal Fesch at least had the letter of the law on his side; but we cannot excuse him because he knew that the Pope was of a contrary opinion, as he had given him all his own faculties, which could supersede even the conditions required by the Council.

Without entering into a longer discussion, it is sufficient to read the life of Fesch in the *Biographie Universelle* of Michaud or the more extensive life written by Abbé Lyonnet to be convinced that Fesch followed habitually the promptings of his conscience, of which he gave numerous proofs during his extraordinary career under the most trying circumstances.* After the final downfall of his nephew he retired to Rome with Madame Letitia, his sister and the mother of Napoleon; and both led a retired and holy life. At the time of my visit to the Cardinal scarcely anybody spoke of him. His sole occupation was prayer and frequent intercourse with his sister, who was at that time critically ill and who expired a few months later. He himself followed her a year later, after having pre-

* Later researches have shown that Father Thébaud's account of Cardinal Fesch's relations to Josephine's marriage and to the questions connected therewith are not quite correct. Readers desiring to inform themselves on this point may refer to M. Goyau's article on Napoleon in *The Catholic Encyclopedia.—Ed. Records and Studies.*

pared for his last end by years of seclusion and private devotions of which scarcely anybody knew anything.

But the misdeeds of his nephew, the Emperor, continued to prejudice public opinion against him. People often attributed to him an unscrupulous ambition of which, however, he was free. Nearly all good Catholics at that time were firmly attached to the Bourbon cause and naturally detested everything connected with the Bonapartes. The Jesuits, no doubt, shared this feeling, though unconscious of it, and they had reasons for doing so. The kind treatment that I received at the hands of the Cardinal made a deep impression on me, which leads me to make the above statement.

But I have not finished the story of my young protégé. He was very faithful in his attendance at the College, and as I was myself following the lessons of Father Manera on Grace, and occasionally those of Father Perrone, I saw him every day among the few seculars who came for theological instruction. He had procured a decent cassock and *mantella*, and appeared very attentive to the lectures, which he always followed pen in hand. But he complied with my request not to call on me often after class if he had nothing important to communicate. In fact, he seldom came to have a chat with me.

One day, however, nearly two months after he had secured this pleasant position, he came to inform me of some very sad news he had just received. A letter from his relations in France told him that the French police knew that he was in Rome, and that measures were being taken for his extradition. The Cardinal, as we have said, had suggested the possibility of this. He could no longer remain in the comfortable quarters

provided for him by the Cardinal's generosity. What was to be done? I told him that he must apply to Father Vaures, who knew him well by this time. He would certainly make some useful suggestions. I was forbidden by my superiors to advise him.

He therefore went to see Father Vaures. The French police, said the friar, would certainly reach him in the Cardinal's palace; and this would create a sensation in the city quite unpleasant for all connected with the affair. He must therefore leave instantly, after heartily thanking Cardinal Fesch, who had so generously harbored him. The only place where the French Ambassador could not give him trouble was a convent. The ecclesiastical immunities granted to religious houses by canon law were in full vigor in the Papal States. No minister of Louis Philippe would dare to claim a French subject who had taken refuge in a monastery and received the habit.

The poor young man when he received this communication from Father Vaures felt sadly perplexed. His conscience told him that it was rash to take vows without a vocation. He did not speak of his conscience to Father Vaures but told him that he had never entertained any idea of becoming a religious. "*Mon cher ami*," answered Father Vaures, "*l'appétit vient en mangeant.*" He himself, Vaures remarked, had never thought of entering a religious order until M. de Chateaubriand told him that a French ecclesiastic in Rome could not hope to acquire any influence unless he bore the religious habit. Finally he assured the young man that if he wished to be a Conventual he would make everything easy for his admission into their novitiate, where he could dare the whole French

gendarmerie to take him out and make a soldier of him.

The poor fellow after relating all this strange conversation to me actually threw himself at my feet and said, "Please tell me, Father, what I must do." "I cannot," I replied, "advise you to become a religious in spite of yourself and under restraint. It is a free giving of the whole soul and body to God; and only those who are generous enough to make this sacrifice with the intention of persevering through life can hope to receive from God the help required for its thorough performance. The phrase of Father Vaures," I added, "that *l'appétit vient en mangeant* has a very ugly meaning which I do not believe the good man, whom I highly respect, ever intended. He may have wished to convey the idea that for those who do not at first feel any inclination for the practice of the evangelical counsels, but intend truly to devote themselves to God, the road is hard at the beginning, but if there is good will on the part of the subject and he makes his best efforts to conquer himself, it becomes more easy in the course of time. This is all I can say; but it is to the director of your conscience rather than to me that you ought to apply for advice in your present position. All I can promise is that I shall pray for you."

Since that day I occasionally saw the young man in the streets of Rome, clad in the Conventual habit, walking with other young men who were evidently novices like himself, but he probably never spoke to me because he wished no further services from me.

It may be of interest here, to compare the Italian Conventuals with those of France before the Revolution. I shall therefore recount a few anecdotes concerning

their monasteries in France during the old régime. I heard a great deal from old clergymen who were ordained before the Revolution about the monks of the pre-Revolutionary period and I personally knew some few ex-religious, Capuchins, Benedictines, Recollets, and Oratorians, who had survived the extinction of their Orders. I shall first recall the accounts I received from old priests or from the people generally, especially from my father. It must be said that the extinct Congregations did not appear to have left deep regrets behind them. In France their lives were for the most part much less regular than in Italy, though in Nantes I never heard any scandalous reports about them. Under Louis XV and Louis XVI Archbishop Loménie de Brienne, a prelate of notoriously bad life, a friend of Voltaire and D'Alembert, took advantage of the unpopularity of the monks to have himself appointed the head of a commission for investigating the moral state of religious houses in France. He abolished many convents by consolidating several into one. He did this without consulting the Holy See, and though the Pope remonstrated he went on meeting with scarcely any opposition from Frenchmen, lay or clerical. Moreover, when the decrees passed by the Constituent Assembly in 1790 for the suppression of convents was carried out almost the only opposition came from the religious houses of women, or from their sympathizers. The monks in general left their monasteries with more joy than regret, and in some instances departed from their monasteries walking in procession through the streets with fiddlers at their head. This would surely not have happened in Italy.

I heard in Nantes from a very good priest ordained

before the Revolution, whose name I cannot now remember, many anecdotes connected with religious houses of men. A story was told of Fouché, who was at that time an Oratorian, and according to my authority was professor of philosophy in the Oratorian college in Nantes. The *Biographie Universelle* of Michaud says he was then prefect of studies. There is no great difference between these offices in point of importance, still I prefer the testimony of my friend, the old clergyman, because, at least for Fouché's early life Michaud's biography is unreliable. I have already stated on the testimony of M. Poisson of Le Pelerin that the celebrated regicide was born *au Pelerin*, a simple bourg, not at Nantes; that his father was a poor cooper whom he refused to recognize and to help when he became a great man; and that, consequently, he did not belong to a prosperous family like that of a captain of a merchant vessel, as Michaud says. The old priest said that he had seen Fouché on several important occasions and particularly once when he presided over his class at a public "act" of philosophy. Fouché had nothing remarkable either in his appearance or his teaching. He did not enjoy any great reputation, as Michaud's biography claims. Many good clergymen in Nantes suspected him of very loose notions in philosophy and religion. Personally, the old priest despised him, and was not at all surprised to see him in 1789 and 1790 give up his profession, throw himself into the whirlwind of political agitation, marry a common and coarse wife, and forget entirely that he had been a member of a religious Congregation. Fortunately for him, he was not in Orders, not even a subdeacon when this took place, and consequently the scandal he gave was not

so great as the apostasy of many of his colleagues. The French Oratory founded by the saintly Cardinal de Berulle had little in common with the Congregation of St. Philip Neri. At first they rendered great services to the Church and to the cause of education. But soon after the death of the founder they began to decline in fervor and efficiency, and after awhile many of them became rank Jansenists, without mentioning their extreme and universal Gallicanism. At the outbreak of the Revolution most of them favored its religious and political innovations. Few of them, if any, refused to adopt the schismatical Civil Constitution of the Clergy. A number among them for a short time remained in their colleges after having taken the prescribed oath. But as soon as the excesses of 1792 and 1793 took place their colleges were closed—I saw the one they had at Nantes occupied by the *gendarmerie*, and their church turned into a hay barn. Most of their men, even the priests among them, married. Daunou was one of these apostates, and remained all his life a pronounced infidel. In my time some of the old Oratorians were still alive in Nantes and had resumed teaching as a profession; but they acted as simple laymen teaching a class in the Lycée, as it was called under Napoleon, and most of them had wives and children at home. I think that M. Latour, *Proviseur au Lycée* when I was a little boy, had been formerly an Oratorian. He did not, however, go as far as many of his colleagues, but continued to wear the cassock and occasionally said Mass. I have seen certificates signed by him as *Proviseur*, that is, President, in which he took the title of *Prêtre de Jésus Christ*.

I never had any personal intercourse with any of

these ex-Oratorians, but I can state that their prestige as an ecclesiastical Congregation was altogether gone. No one felt any regret that they had disappeared and I was surprised when the Abbé Gratry under Napoleon III undertook to revive them under the same name and with the same object.

We now come to the Capuchins, of whom the same old clergyman told me a curious story. Previous to the Revolution he had known a very austere monk belonging to the Capuchin monastery of Nantes. Until the Revolution the inmates of that house remained exemplary religious, and my father, who knew them well, was edified by their conduct and zeal in his boyhood. One of them had a great reputation for sanctity. Still when the time for their dispersion arrived he displayed an unnatural joy which strongly contrasted with the universal grief of his brethren. He showed a great admiration for the Revolution, not only cast away his habit, as all were obliged to do, but was henceforth a sharer in all the public demonstrations of popular frenzy. One day the clergyman who related the story, and who was quite young when the incident happened, met him by chance in the street and was attracted by his frantically shouting the magic motto, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

"I wonder," said the clergyman, "what you mean by choosing for yourself such an extravagant career. What is the meaning of the new attire I see on you, so different from the cowl and sandals? Either you were formerly a hypocrite, or you are now a fool." "What do you say?" replied the ex-Capuchin. "In both cases I intended to enjoy myself; in the first as a jolly friar surrounded by a bevy of dear devotees, and now

as a man emancipated from the thraldom of the cloister." "I understand you," retorted the priest, "but, unfortunately for you, you have made a great mistake both times, in the first by choosing to go to hell through the mortified life of a monk, when you could have adopted a more pleasant way; in the present case by turning against you all the friends you had, and trying to replace them by false friends who cannot but despise you." He added that the last thrust of his witty tongue produced an immediate change on the face of the ex-monk, who felt the stern reproach of the priest and without replying a word turned away dejected and sulky. Even among the best religious in France at that time there were a few apostates. The infamous Jacobin Chabot had also been a Capuchin, and I have no doubt there were others. But most of the Capuchins were pious and zealous men who after they were obliged to leave their convents tried to live according to their rule as well as they could. Many of them, I am sure, perished under the Proconsul Carrier, either drowned in the Loire, or shot at Gigan, one of the suburbs of the city, or finally guillotined on the Place du Bouffay.

My father, who as a boy lived in the western part of the city, near the harbor called Quai de la Fosse, went often to the Capuchin convent which was built on an elevated plateau running parallel to the Loire, whose placid bosom could be seen from the yards and gardens of the monks. At the present time the exact position could hardly be ascertained, on account of the many streets and squares which have been built in this part of the modernized city. But my father could not possibly have forgotten the place. The Capuchins

were not satisfied with the usual works of zeal to which they were devoted; they attracted to their house on Sundays the young men of the neighborhood, who after hearing Mass in the morning and assisting at Vespers in the afternoon, spent the remainder of the day in innocent amusements on the extensive grounds of the monastery. They had therefore already begun to provide innocent amusement for young men, guarding them against danger and protecting their faith, a system which has since then been greatly extended. Of all the Capuchins living in Nantes before the Revolution, only one survived it to my knowledge. He was known in my time under the name of M. Albert, and no one appeared to be aware that he had been a religious. But he was a most exemplary clergyman, lived as an inmate in the house of M. de Beauregard, the worthy curé of Ste. Croix, and labored zealously in the ministry. Strange to say, however, he was most rigid as a confessor and carried severity to a length which is scarcely credible in a Capuchin.

A few words will suffice with regard to the Benedictines and the Récollets in Nantes, before 1790. The first of these Orders had degenerated throughout France and particularly in my native city; the other had continued faithful to its rules and persevered in poverty and works of zeal among the people. The only Benedictine monastery which flourished at Nantes was built in a splendid locality on the banks of the Loire on the spot so well known to me as St. James' parish. The reader has not forgotten St. Jacques and the excellent M. Michon. At the time of their suppression the former Conventual church had been changed into a parish church. I suppose that formerly the monks

had under their charge the care of the parish, as there had never been any religious edifice in the neighborhood sufficiently large for the population. It is in this church that I made my First Communion, and consequently I could never forget it. From the sacristy a door which was generally locked led into the precincts of the convent. The first building which you met on your way was the abbot's house, *l'abbatialle*, a modern construction evidently not older than the last century, but well built and roomy inside, so that the Father Abbot must have been a grand personage. Quite near this first edifice was to be seen a still larger one in the same style in which the monks lived together in community when they were not busy in the neighborhood or in the town. I do not know what became of this monastery during the Revolutionary period after the departure of the monks, but under Napoleon I, the church having been devoted to parish purposes, the monastery itself was turned into a poorhouse—*dépôt de mendicité*. As the former Conventual buildings would not have been large enough for this last purpose, twelve ill-looking buildings in the form of parallelograms had been constructed, six on one side, and six on the other, on a splendid esplanade overlooking the river. This must formerly have been a large, beautiful garden for the monks. I have been told that at the outbreak of the Revolution the monastery had only five inmates and that its revenues, which were princely, were spent for their own comfort. I would not, however, vouch for this, because if they had not done some good with their money they would probably have led scandalous lives, which was not the case. The people of the neighborhood never spoke

ill of them, though they did not appear to regret them much.

Of all those that lived in this monastery before the Revolution only one remained in Nantes under Napoleon and the Bourbons. He had emigrated to England, came back at the time of the Concordat, and without accepting any position in the ministry said his Mass regularly in the Church of Ste. Croix, my own native parish, and supported himself by giving lessons in English to those who wished to learn that language in Nantes. His name was M. Gressier and I knew him well. His manners were polite and pleasant, but though his life was correct and becoming he never associated with other clergymen. I never met him in the company of the parish priest and his curates whom I often visited when a young man; the only remark of respect he gave them was to bow to them in the sacristy whenever he came to say his Mass. For several years I witnessed this nearly every morning.

In my youthful days there were in France many Benedictines who had survived the Revolution. But they made no effort to revive the Order. A young secular clergyman, l'Abbé Guéranger, conceived this project and succeeded. The Jesuit Fathers acted quite differently, though they had been suppressed long before the French Revolution. The Capuchins, also, before 1830 were again in existence and tried to connect the present with the past. The Benedictines seemed to have entirely given up the idea of resuming their habit and Rule. The Récollets, though they never were numerous in France, preserved their strictness of discipline to the end. As was seen, their small and poor convent in Nantes was built on one of the

little islands over which a succession of bridges had been erected to connect the right with the left bank of the Loire, ending at St. James' parish, my dear St. Jacques. I have already related that the monastery was sacked, the books of the library thrown into the river, and the monks driven away. They had spent many years in that wretched suburb, and though entirely devoted to the people the inhabitants had vented their fury on the inoffensive friars.

As of the Benedictines, so also of the Récollets only one remained after the Revolution, and his name was Frère Placide, a name to which his conduct entitled him. How he had spent the time of the Terror I never learnt, for out of respectful pity for him, though only a child of ten or eleven, I never could screw up courage enough to ask him the question. Undoubtedly his story was very sad. He had never taken the oath to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, and had never emigrated to a foreign country. The only change I noticed in him was that he had put off his friar's garb and donned the cassock usually worn by secular priests. Instead of dwelling in his former convent, turned into a sugar refinery, he had to live as a pilgrim on earth, depending probably on some poor people who in the midst of an anti-Christian population clung to the practice of their religion. Those poor Catholic men and women, when they were sincerely attached to their faith, heard the Mass of a *jureur*, that is of a priest who had sworn to the Constitution of the Clergy, but they would have considered it a sacrilege to receive the sacraments from those apostates. Those of St. James' parish had Brother Placide to rely upon, and to him they applied for the baptism of their children,

for their marriages, and for the worthy reception of Penance and the Eucharist. During a few months in 1790 Brother Placide could do this in safety; but soon laws were passed by the Assembly in Paris which made it a crime for a clergyman to exercise his priestly functions if he had not bound himself to a godless state by his oath. Under the Convention faithful priests were threatened with death. How the friar escaped for so many years is a mystery. For nearly ten years his life was like that of the hunted Irish priests during the days of the Penal Laws. But in the Green Isle the people were the friends of the monks and did their best to shelter them; in France very few extended a protecting hand over the persecuted priest.

When Napoleon became First Consul the intolerant laws of the Revolution were ignored. Brother Placide was allowed to resume his priestly functions. I know nothing of his subsequent life until the month of February, 1818, when I became a boarder in M. Michon's house. Brother Placide at that time occupied a couple of rooms in a dilapidated house just opposite the Church of St. Jacques, on the square of the same name. How he could live and pay the rent of even so wretched an apartment has always been a mystery to me. For he had no means except the stipend of his Mass, which he said most devoutly every morning. He was not employed by the parishioners either as teacher or in any other capacity. He never took part in any church ceremonies at funerals or for baptisms, marriages, etc., was not called upon to preach or instruct the people, and had not even a confessional for his own use. I was surprised that neither M. le Curé nor even the good *Vicaire* appeared to care for him. But at the time of

his death, at which I was present, the mystery was partly explained. The thing which puzzled me most was especially made clear. Why did he live alone, performing no priestly function? Why did not the excellent priest with whom I spent two full years of unalloyed happiness invite him to occupy a room in his own house? That M. le Curé did not do so could not appear surprising to me. M. Guibert, I knew, had no sympathy with a friar who had not taken the oath. But M. Michon, a Vendean, I was sure, respected the noble man who at Nantes had proved his attachment to Catholicism just as the priests of la Vendée had done in their wilderness of the *Cocage* and the *Marais*. But when I saw Brother Placide dying, surrounded by all the grannies of the neighborhood and by their ragged urchins, I understood the whole problem of his life and his death.

Brother Placide during ten years of his life had been excluded from what is generally called civilized existence. He had no other friends except the poor, he had not even a single brother friar to keep him company; he had no regular occupation. He had consequently forgotten altogether what is called regularity in a convent, but this was not his fault. It was probably as impossible for him to adopt regular habits as it was for M. Armand Béchard to sleep in a house after having wandered in the fields during the whole of the Vendean wars. Brother Placide preferred the humble company of those who had during so long a time ministered to his wants. Of all this I became certain when he became sick and died. I had sometimes served his Mass during his lifetime. It was impossible not to be edified in assisting at it; and though he was a man of marked

peculiarities I never felt inclined to laugh at him. What struck me particularly was the way in which he pronounced the words of consecration, in which he certainly did not observe the rubrics and for which he would have been reprimanded if he had been in his former convent.

Fearing that he would not consecrate properly, he repeated each word from five to ten times and this he did with so loud a voice that he could be distinctly heard at the door of the church. Once at table in M. Michon's house one of us little fellows mentioned this singular fact and laughed outright. M. Michon, who never liked such remarks, told the little boy to be silent or he would be punished. "I would like," he said, "to be as pure of heart and as dear to our Saviour as good Brother Placide is." As regards his poverty I was convinced that whenever his poor friends were not able to supply his wants, M. Michon's purse protected the Brother against hunger and cold. Finally in 1819 poor Brother Placide could no longer go to church to say his Mass and at last M. Michon told us one morning after breakfast that he was going to give the last Sacraments to the good Récollet. He told us to go with him and to follow him with great devotion as a proof of respect for the good man.

At that time this ceremony was always public. The procession was very short, as from the church to the house there was only the public square to cross. A good number of extremely poor people were found in the church, because they knew what was going to happen when we marched with them to the house. When we arrived it was impossible to enter. The priests had to go two flights up stairs to reach the room

of the sick man; but not only the room but the staircase was crowded with people and a great space outside around the door was alive with more than three or four dozen of the faithful. Perfect silence reigned in that multitude, who all fell on their knees; and M. Michon had to stop a short time under the canopy and in a low voice directed a couple of men who had accompanied him to go in and make room for himself and his followers. About five minutes were consumed in doing this and at last we entered the poor apartment. The spectacle which I witnessed I could never forget. A good-sized room, bare of furniture and ornaments except the bed, on which was stretched the sick man, and a small table at the head of it with the usual crucifix and candles, was still crowded with old women of the most humble condition, attired in the garb of poverty. They had just left space enough for M. Michon and for two or three acolytes. I was one of the happy but small number.

All the women were on their knees except two very old and stout grannies who evidently had been for many years his best friends and attendants. They supported him and enabled him to sit up in his bed, propped up with pillows. His face was wan and his body worn out and bowed. Still there was an expression of joy in his eyes at his approaching end and his lips moved slowly in prayer preparing to receive his Saviour. During the three or four days that elapsed before the friar's death his rooms never ceased to be crowded with people coming or going away, all with some word of comfort or some humble token of affection. I was sent by M. Michon with some message for him on the very day which preceded his death. There were

not then so many persons around him as on the day he received the last rites of the Church, but the room was nearly full and it must have been emptied and filled more than twenty times from early morn till late in the evening. It was indeed a touching sight which must have consoled the aged sufferer.

## CHAPTER V

### DOM GUÉRANGER AND THE BENEDICTINES

On my way to Italy, as I have already said, I had heard from my friend Eugène Gardereau at Angers that an attempt was about to be made to re-establish the Benedictines in France. A priest of Le Mans, l'Abbé Guéranger, had conceived this project, and had already bought Solesmes, which was to be the head-quarters of the new enterprise. He was just on the point of starting for Rome, and on his return Gardereau with several other young priests or aspirants to the priesthood intended to join him and begin at once the Congrégation de France.

I told Gardereau to mention my name to M. Guéranger as that of a friend and well-wisher though not a candidate for his new monastery, and to tell him where I could be found in Rome when he would arrive there, so I became acquainted with him in the Holy City, and though I could not help him in the furtherance of his work I nevertheless was informed of several circumstances concerning it which may prove interesting to the reader.

The first time I saw him was in our novitiate of Saint Andrew. He was then on the point of entering the Benedictine Monastery of San Callisto as a novice. He came to say Mass in the room of St. Stanislaus Kostka and we had a conversation together when he was taking his chocolate before going away. He was

full of the great project which brought him to Rome, but he said very little of it to me, as it was still doubtful whether he would succeed, and there was no need of communicating his plans to me, since I was not in a position to help him. It seems that the opposition he met with was chiefly due to the bad odor in which the French Benedictines were in Rome before the Revolution, on account of the Gallicanism which prevailed among them, and of a strong leaning to Jansenism which was remarked in some of them. Nothing of the kind, of course, was to be feared in M. Guéranger, but who could assure the Roman authorities that the former traditions of the Order would not revive in the new Congregation? Father Rozaven was one of those appointed on the commission to examine the question, and I afterwards heard Dom Guéranger express his gratitude to the Jesuits.

After I was sent to the Roman College, on November 4, 1836, I had more frequent intercourse with Dom Guéranger on account of the greater freedom allowed me to see my outside friends. He had been admitted to the Benedictine Order as a novice and it was my duty to call on him. He was living in San Callisto, and the tomb of St. Cecilia, confided to the care of his Order, excited his interest, and he may have already thought of writing his *Life of Saint Cecilia;* at all events he spoke to me of exploring the catacombs. At that time De Rossi was quite a young man, without reputation. The Jesuit, Father Marchi, who devoted nearly all his time to studying the Roman catacombs, was the great authority on Christian antiquities, and De Rossi was his pupil. Dom Guéranger paid me a visit for the purpose of being introduced to Father Marchi, as he was living

The Roman College, Rome.

at the Roman College where I was staying. I brought them together and later on the excellent Benedictine novice expressed himself highly gratified for all he had seen under the guidance of Father Marchi.

Dom Guéranger had his eyes fixed on his own convent. The Benedictines in Italy, especially in Rome, were better thought of there than the French Benedictines had been. They were neither Gallicans nor Jansenists. It was for this reason that the Holy Father had obliged the future restorer of the Order in France to spend more than a year at San Callisto. Guéranger appreciated fully the dangerous character of the four articles of the Gallican clergy, and of the five propositions contained in the *Augustinus* of the Bishop of Ypres. He was a holy as well as a learned man, and felt deeply the necessity of preserving all religious Orders, particularly his own, from all the errors of faith and morals. All the Benedictine monasteries in France since their restoration have been models of discipline and of firm attachment to the Holy See. Dom Guéranger spoke to me frankly on this subject; he even suggested that his Italian brethren might find something to reform in their daily life. Not that he spoke of any disorders among them, but he thought that they could better employ their time than many of them did.

" Imagine," he said to me one day, " what I witness invariably every morning. As soon as the duties at the altar and in the choir are performed I see either the abbot or the prior walking in state in the cloister. Directly, a whole troop of religious, chiefly young men, approach him one after the other, each one in turn bends the knee, takes the hand which he offers, kisses it, and without a word said departs, and is free to go

whithersoever he chooses. It is not surprising after this that no great work, literary or theological, is undertaken for the good of religion. We intend to do better than this at Solesmes."

In former times the Benedictines did much more as writers in France than in Italy, though here they can boast of some noble authors. But recently they have achieved little in the country of Muratori and Mansi. At this moment, it is true, the monks of Monte Cassino—whom the Italian government has left in peace among their mountains—are engaged in preparing for publication a number of precious manuscripts they possess.

Dom Guéranger was an extremely amiable man, and it gives me pleasure to record an instance or two of his affability. He came to the Roman College on June 21, 1837, to say his Mass in the room of St. Aloysius, and afterwards I was asked to keep him company at breakfast. There were all around us crowds of cardinals, bishops, church dignitaries of every kind, besides religious of all Orders, and sprightly *abbati* from all nations. I confess I preferred the company of this little Frenchman who harbored great thoughts under his modest and bright exterior. As soon as we were seated at table, he said: "You are happy in the character of your saints. Though you have not so many as we have, because we are much older than you, still you have arranged them so well that every class of men can find a patron in one of them. The superiors among you have a bright model in St. Ignatius; the foreign missionaries could not wish for a better one than St. Francis Xavier; the ordinary religious can choose between St. Francis Borgia, St. Francis Regis, and

many others; your young men who study have St. Aloysius; your novices the sweet Stanislaus Kostka, and your lay brothers the admirable Brother Alphonsus. In Rome, particularly, the three great houses you possess are rich in the relics of the best patron they could have: Ignatius at the Gesú; Aloysius here at the Roman College, and Stanislaus at the novitiate. People in the world, if they are good Christians, can also find among your saints attractive patterns to suit all tastes: Ignatius for the generals, captains, soldiers; Francis Xavier for the travellers and discoverers of new worlds; Claver for the humanitarians and negrophiles; Alphonsus for the humble classes of society; Aloysius for the young men who wish to remain chaste; Stanislaus for the innocent children. I could write a book," added he in conclusion, " to show that the Jesuits ought to be popular, as they are in fact among all good people, on account of their many-sided virtues."

Meanwhile on the table before us there had been served, besides a few slices of excellent chicken, a good-sized cup of chocolate, and another of ice cream, but the speaker in his enthusiasm did not think at first of tasting anything. I did so on the sly and remarked within me that the chocolate was excessively hot and the cream remarkably cold.

At the end of his remarks he plunged his small spoon into the chocolate, and brought it to his mouth, thinking he could swallow it. But it was an operation more difficult than he imagined, and dropping the spoon in the cup he tried, like a well-bred man, not to show that his tongue was burnt. I had, fortunately, anticipated that moment, and dipping another spoon in his cream, I brought it to his lips in time to allay instantly

the pain he suffered. "Now, my dear friend," I said opportunely, "if ever you say that the Jesuits *soufflent le froid et le chaud*, you must also declare that the cold is the best thing in the world to take the sting out of what is too hot." We both laughed good naturedly, which prevented him from indulging in another flight of eloquence.

Meanwhile the time assigned for the end of his novitiate by the Roman authorities was drawing to a close, and everything was soon arranged for his return to France, where he was authorized to re-establish the Benedictine Order under the name of Congregation of France. He came to see me at the end of October and we had a long talk together. He was, of course, full of the project so dear to his heart, and spoke with warmth of what he intended to do. "As soon as we are settled at Solesmes," he said, "my intention is to state on the first page of our Annals that we owe our restoration in France, next to God, chiefly to the exertions of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, particularly to Father Rozaven. Without him we scarcely could have succeeded so early, and it must be our sacred duty always to cultivate a holy friendship with you."

This is the last time I saw Dom Guéranger. In 1837 he left Italy for France in company with Lacordaire. The two men travelled in a *vettura* and thus spent some six weeks in each other's company, probably discussing each other's plans. At all events, on their arrival in France, Lacordaire went straightway to Solesmes with his friend, and wrote his little book on St. Dominic and the Inquisition. Then without stopping much longer in France, he returned to Rome, offered himself to the Holy Father, and began his

novitiate as a Dominican. The Order of Dominicans as re-established by Lacordaire differs as much from the Italian branch by its greater adherence to the primitive rules of the Founder as the Benedictine Congregation revived by Dom Guéranger does from the Italian monasteries of St. Benedict.

A few words have already been said on my pilgrimage to Subiaco, but as it is then chiefly that I became acquainted with the oldest Order of monks in Europe I must here give fuller details. On the 26th of May, 1836, I was sent together with Father Angelo Zuliani of Verona to that celebrated convent, situated in the Sabine country at the foot of the Apennines near the frontier of the kingdom of Naples, though at a distance of some forty miles from Rome. The excellent Father Maurizi of Camerino, then master of novices, gave us his instructions for the trip. We were to stop a full day at Tivoli in the college kept by the Fathers of the Society; then proceed to Arsoli, a village half-way between Tivoli and Subiaco. Our stay in that rural place would last three or four days, in which we would give a short retreat to the children in preparation for their First Communion, and hear the confessions of all the people of the parish who would wish for strange confessors. This would end on Corpus Christi day by the solemn procession of the Blessed Sacrament. The day following we would start for Subiaco, but before proceeding to the monastery we were to call on the vicar general of the diocese, as the bishop was then absent. Finally, we were allowed to stay two days in the Benedictine monastery before coming back the same way. All our rules on modesty, apostolic zeal, charity, poverty were dwelt on by the fatherly

old man, himself a model of religious life, and of truly refined though simple manners, whom I have ever since most tenderly loved.

The weather had been very bad until almost the moment of our starting. It had rained persistently from the beginning of May and all the farmers were in despair, fearing that their crops would be destroyed. The wheat particularly, cultivated on the fertile *Campagna Romana,* whose ears were already filled with the grain, was in danger of being thrown down by the torrents of rain and of rotting before it was ripe. In all country churches and in Rome itself prayers were going up to heaven, and long processions of rustic swains and aged husbandmen, headed by their pastors with crosses and banners, were addressing heaven with fervor and calling on Almighty God to have pity on them and send more propitious weather.

At last on the 26th of May, the feast of St. Philip Neri, the Apostle of Rome, the sun appeared in full splendor and all Rome thought that the change was due to his prayers. I still remember the pleasant sensation of warmth we felt in the midst of verdant fields after leaving the city early in the morning. The orchards of orange-trees, so numerous in the gardens around Rome, were then in full bloom, and the sweet fragrance of millions of orange blossoms filled the air with a perfume more sweet than those of "Araby the Blessed."

At the gate of San Lorenzo stood a solitary sentinel of the Papal Army. He appeared surprised at our dress, especially at our long staffs and short pilgrims' cloaks. After a short pause he saluted us and we replied with a respectful bow. We had a glorious sight before us on the road leading to Tivoli. It was not the

desolate plain which I often contemplated on Thursdays, when we went either from the novitiate, or the Roman College, to the Macao. But on that morning of May 26, 1836, instead of the dreariness of that desert in August, we had before us the most delightful scene of rural bliss—immense fields of cereals with their heads nodding under the gentle impulse of the slightest zephyr, bending at times in undulation like the swelling waves of the sea, verdant meadows almost ready for the scythe, brilliant with the dew of the morning and filling the air with the fragrance of innumerable blossoms. The few trees we met on the way, though stunted and dwarfish, still looked spruce and young with their new green dress which the long rain of the past month had cleaned for them, and spread like velvet draperies over their boughs. Nature at this time of rapid growth needed not the help of man, so few farmers were in sight. Here and there on the borders of some contiguous fields huts of peculiar shape were evidently inhabited. They had the conical form so frequent in the wilderness of central Africa, and they were so low that it was scarcely possible for a man to stand inside. But when the curtains hanging in front of the entrance were pushed aside, it was by the hand of a smiling man who came out to look with rapture on the agricultural wealth which the rains had generously lavished on the fruitful soil.

In the midst of this smiling paradise we walked slowly, sometimes silent, oftener engaged in a pleasant conversation for which the attractive scenery spread before us furnished the chief theme. When we reached the little stream called Albula, of which we both had read the graphic description given by Father

Kircher, we did not fail to drink some of its sulphurous waters.

Soon after we began to hear the roaring cascades of Tivoli, though they were still several miles away, and then we crossed the beautiful bridge over the Anio, and read the grandiloquent inscription of a monument erected nearly two thousand years before over the tomb of a Roman general whose name I have forgotten. Then the road turned to the left, leaving on our right the extensive ruins of the Villa of Hadrian, and directly the ascent of the range of hills, on which Tivoli stands, told us our first station was near at hand.

At the end of our eighteen-mile walk we were almost as fresh as on starting. Though the sun had shone brilliantly, the heat was gentle and pleasant. The road was now alive with people in the picturesque dress of the Roman peasantry. Nearly every group we passed saluted us on account of our pilgrims' garb, and often said *Sia lodato Gesú Cristo*, to which we invariably answered *Sempre sia lodato*. This greeting was very soothing to our hearts, as it convinced us that we were in a thoroughly Christian land, and that the souls of all around us were in harmony with our own.

In this disposition of mind and heart we reached the college, where we were received with open arms and welcomed to the hospitality of the house. The following day being Thursday the classes at the college were closed and the community went to the villa for the weekly recreation. I will not attempt to describe Tivoli with its temple of the Sibyl, its foaming waterfall disappearing under a bold tunnel, the work of Gregory XVI, and its graceful *cascatelle* issuing in a

hundred different streams from the side of a huge rock clad with verdure and decked with rich bouquets of blossoms kept always fresh by the spray of the falling waters.

The college community, as we have said, went to the villa, and I went thither myself with Zuliani after we had seen the lions of the town. That villa, or rather *vigna*, occupied a classical spot in the suburban country outside the wall. Under the main building excavations had been made and the substructure of an old patrician's house had been discovered, which some Roman archaeologists said had been the celebrated Villa of Horace of which the poet gave such a delightful description. Our Fathers were of the opinion that this old building was truly the one celebrated by the great friend of Maecenas, though other archaeologists stoutly opposed that opinion and maintained that the Tibur Villa of Horace was in a very different spot. I will not attempt to solve the difficulty, but at least nobody can deny that the country-house of our Tivoli college was built on the ruins of a real patrician's villa of which it is proper to give some description here.

The whole superstructure had been demolished and the new villa occupied the place of it. In the ground, however, the foundations of the ancient building remained and showed that it was an extensive edifice. Its most remarkable feature was the hot baths. The upper story had entirely disappeared, but under ground were to be seen brick or iron furnaces or vats for generating steam. This was conveyed to the upper apartments by pipes built solidly of brick of which many parts remained still intact. The Romans did not use cast-iron pipes, but their brick and cement

pipes were even more durable and less subject to explosion. I admired their ingenuity, for at our villa at Macao I tested their mortar, which was almost indestructible, and which has not been equaled in modern times. But what attracted my attention most was the material comfort to which they had attained. They had many of our modern inventions and some contrivances superior to those of the present day.

The day after our visit to the supposed villa of Horace, very early in the morning Father Zuliani and myself had resumed our pilgrims' staves, and we were wending our way through the hills of the ancient Marsi, the neighbors of the Sabines. After the fine weather of the previous two days the country was radiant in all the glories of Spring. The hedges on both sides of the road were loaded with blossoms, most of them unknown to me, birds innumerable flew rapidly from tree and shrub, and filled the air with joyous song. The River Anio, along which we travelled, filled to overflowing by previous rains, beat audibly against its rocky banks; the high hills, the last spurs of the Apennines, were cultivated to the very top, owing to a succession of terraces which kept the soil from being washed away into the valley. I had never seen a richer country and one better tilled; not an inch of ground was left unproductive. The fields were teeming with rich crops of maize and cereals, enclosed within long rows of olive-trees or of grape-vines already in full bloom, as fragrant almost as the blossom of the orange. Laborers in great numbers were employed in hoeing, pruning, and manuring, sure now of reaping an abundant harvest the following July and August.

We reached Arsoli early in the afternoon. The good

*parroco* expected us, received us warmly and proposed a plan of operations which was to be carried into effect the following morning. Three days were to be devoted to preparing the children of the parish for their first communion, and preaching to the people every night; the fourth day there was to be a grand procession of the Blessed Sacrament. After all this he thought we would be entitled to a day of rest in his house, when he would show us the great sight of the place, namely the splendid villa of Prince Massimi near to the village.

Arsoli deserves only the name of village though its inhabitants call it a town. Nearly the whole population are farmers, among whom a few shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, etc., are scattered so as almost to escape notice. We soon became acquainted with some of the inhabitants, because they had been told in church by the pastor that although we had come chiefly for the children, we would nevertheless hear the confessions of all those who wished to come. I was surprised to find that nearly all were extremely poor though they tilled so fertile a district. They were greatly attached to their religion, and came in crowds every evening to hear Father Zuliani preach, which he did with a great deal of fervor. The children were extremely interesting and full of fun and spirit; a few of them were almost too precocious, which painfully surprised me in so primitive and out of the way a place.

The pastor, nearly as poor as his people, struck me as being wanting in activity and exterior zeal, a defect of which he must have been altogether unconscious. He had a young curate to help him, and two other priests lived in the village without any apparent occupation except saying Mass and assisting at the public offices

in the church. Four priests in such a place should have done wonders, still many things remained undone. In a French parish this would not have been the case. But it must be said that the French clergy had been tried for nearly a hundred years of sore vexation, and nothing is more likely to stir up zeal in a priest than this. I have no doubt that at present the Italian secular clergy is more efficient than it was then. Of course, it would be rash to conclude that every parish in Italy resembled Arsoli, but I remarked the same lack of energy in several other places.

The great day of Corpus Christi drew my attention to other features of Italian church life. I will not describe the pageant, which was truly edifying and somewhat impressive. All Catholics know the ceremonies of this great feast, the procession with its lines of men and women clad in their best attire, the solemn chant, and pious music, the Holy of Holies carried slowly by the officiating clergyman in the midst of clouds of fragrant incense and showers of brilliant flowers; the rural repositories on the way, and the grand Benediction in the church at the end.

A ceremony which interested me a great deal and which I did not look for was the solemn and public blessing given to the prisoners, for there was a jail in Arsoli. It was arranged with his majesty, the Podestá, that the procession would march out of its usual way in order to pass in front of the jail, and we found the prisoners all crowding behind the iron bars of the windows, with bare heads, hands joined as in prayer, and the knee bent in supplication. The pastor, who was carrying the Blessed Sacrament, left his place under the canopy and walked slowly in front of the barred

door and gave the Benediction as usual but without chant and music. This scene drew tears from my eyes. It proved to me that Italy was far ahead of France in the public expression of religion. Such a scene was impossible at Nantes, where the Corpus Christi procession was attended with much more solemnity and grandeur.

Arsoli, though an insignificant place, was on the line which then divided the Roman States from the kingdom of Naples. The country around, consequently, swarmed with smugglers, and the celebrated brigands of the Neapolitan territory occasionally made raids into the Papal Dominions. This probably accounts for the jail and its inmates. I remarked that all the magistrates and officials were laymen. I was not astonished at it at that time. However, the journalists of liberal countries, of England particularly, universally stated that nearly all the officials in the Papal States were ecclesiastics. As a matter of fact for one clerical official I found more than twenty who had wives and children and lived on the profits of their offices.

The last day of our stay in Arsoli arrived, and it had been decided that we should pay a visit to the Villa Massimi. The family was, of course, absent, because the month of October is the season of rustication in Italy. In accordance with the instructions usually given by noblemen to the persons they leave in charge of their estates, we were received with great courtesy and everything of importance was shown to us.

In the Massimi castle there was scarcely anything to admire except its hoary antiquity, and the quaintness of its interior arrangements. We spent the greater part of our time in the immense hall, an exact repro-

duction of those described by Walter Scott in his mediæval novels. The Massimi family is perhaps the most ancient in Rome, and the portraits of its ancestors decorated as usual the walls of the immense dining-room where two hundred guests could sit at table. I was dumfounded when I learned that the Dictator Fabius Maximus was claimed to be founder of the Massimi family and I wondered whether there was proof of this except the name of *Massimi* from Maximus. Under each portrait long inscriptions in classic Latin recited the achievements of the original. One of them, I remember, built a road worthy to be compared with the ancient *Viæ Romanæ* in the midst of the forests covering the Marsi mountains, in order that the guardians of the peace could more easily put down the smugglers and the raiders of the neighboring kingdom of Naples. Another had erected a noble bridge over the foaming Anio River and thus had shortened for the surrounding population the distance which separated them from the market-places where they could dispose of their products, etc.

The morning we left Arsoli promised a warm day. Ever since we arrived there the heat had gone on increasing, and as we were already in June we might look for great heat towards noon-day. We started early in order to arrive at Subiaco in time to rest before supper, and as we had taken a solid breakfast we thought we could dispense with dinner and did not load ourselves with bread and *prosciutto*, an excellent kind of preserved meat. The good pastor had told us that we could reach Subiaco very soon after mid-day, but he had not calculated that we should have to rest more than once during our trip. So when noon arrived

we were still far from Subiaco and, being young, both of us felt the pangs of hunger. Meanwhile, between two or three in the afternoon, the heat being really oppressive, we came to a cottage on the road which was not an inn, but a peasant home. We felt the need of resting on a stone seat near the door where there was deep shade, and in front of which ran a small brook whose pure cool waters invited us to halt. Zuliani drank of it and invited me to do the same.

The little house was built of stone and so neat and symmetrical that if there had been a couple of Doric columns in front it would have looked like a small Greek temple. It appeared untenanted, for the door being ajar we could see no one inside. However, in the field behind, among olive-trees and some few orange bushes a few feet high there was a *contadino* working. He had seen us and leaving his work he came to invite us to enter. His polite and hearty invitation was no doubt due to his respect for our pilgrims' garb.

Having accepted his kind invitation we seated ourselves on some wooden stools near a clean deal table on which the good man placed a bright yellow *pagnotta* of Indian corn with some excellent cherries, and a small bottle of wine. The bottle was covered with wicker work and had a long neck of white glass usual in the country districts of Italy. Zuliani helped himself at once, but to his great surprise and to the amazement of the *contadino*, I refused to follow his example.

"Why will you not drink?" the good man inquired. "Are you sick?" "No." "Did you eat or drink lately on the road?" "No," again. "Please explain, Father, why you refuse?" "I leave it to you to find out," said I to him. "It cannot be," he replied, "that

this fare is too simple for you." "Oh! my dear friend, if you knew how thankful I am for your charity." "I see it," he at last said with determination; "you both have just told me that you are going on a pilgrimage to Holy Benedict's cave. You must have made a promise this morning not to touch food or drink until you have prayed before his shrine, is it so?" "I am glad," I replied, "that you have guessed it so soon. It shows that you are a true Christian and can divine the motives of other Christians." After a few words more we both departed, promising that we would pray for him in the holy cave.

Before reaching the monastery we passed rapidly through the town of Subiaco, which far surpasses Arsoli in population and enterprise. It deserves, in fact, the name of a city, and we soon noticed the difference between its inhabitants and the simple people we had met with everywhere since we left Rome. On the country roads as well as in Tivoli and Arsoli we had been everywhere respectfully saluted and received tokens of sympathy on account of our costumes. In Subiaco, though many of the people behaved in the same manner towards us, others seemed to regard us with a very different feeling. The lowering look, the sarcastic smile, the visible sneer of the young men standing idle at the door of the coffee houses or promenading in the streets, indicated that the modern spirit had penetrated even into this out-of-the-way place, and it is a spirit altogether illiberal in spite of its name. There were no direct insults, no show of either revolver or dagger, no imitation of the crow's harsh voice as in France. Still it proved that there were some dark societies at work determined to suppress such mediæval

Sacro Speco, Subiaco, Entrance to the Monastery of S. Beneditto.

institutions as pilgrimages and the Jesuits' garb. Several of these societies were already flourishing at Subiaco, and the police were fully acquainted with the whereabouts of Carbonari's *Vendite* all along the frontier of Naples and the Roman States. Our superiors, therefore, thought it prudent not to send any more novices on pilgrimages to Subiaco.

After a visit of courtesy to the vicar general of the diocese, lasting only a quarter of an hour, we resumed our staves and twenty minutes more of travel brought us to the door of the convent of St. Scholastica at the foot of the high hill on which is perched the other monastery called after St. Benedict and containing the holy cave or *Sacro Speco*. Both are now inhabited by monks; the nuns who formerly lived at St. Scholastica have long ago abandoned it. As the front door of this magnificent edifice of St. Scholastica was wide open, there was no need of ringing the big bell; but in the long and lofty corridor open before us there was neither porter's lodge nor a porter. A small rope on the wall suggested our pulling it and a smaller bell began to tinkle loudly, but no one answered it. Walking up a large staircase we soon found ourselves in another corridor like the first, but with cells on both sides. Knocking at one door, and at another, and then at several others, we heard no voice and no invitation to enter; the house evidently was empty and it was clear that the monks were not afraid of burglars, at least in day-time. The convent looked like an enchanted castle.

"Queer indeed," said Zuliani; "the monks must all be taking their *passeggio;* let us go out and we will find some of them coming home." Going back to Subiaco, whither probably most of the promenaders

had gone, we met four or five of them, whom we accosted hat in hand; none of them answered us. They continued on their way and left us on the road. The same thing happened with a second and third group which immediately followed. This was strange, and Zuliani was persuaded that all Benedictines were repelled by our Jesuit dress and I was inclined to think the same although such an insult seemed to me rather unlikely. We both agreed not to accost any more of the religious we might still meet, but to go and throw ourselves on the mercy of the vicar general for the night; for we had not a penny to pay for a lodging, and we were famished with hunger; I for my part was half dead for the reason known to the reader.

Already the gate of Subiaco—Subiaco had gates like all old towns—was again in sight when a single Benedictine monk passed through it on the way to his convent, and he came straight to us with smiles on his countenance and with both his hands extended as if he was about to embrace us. His friendly greeting, however, did not immediately overcome our prejudice, for we did not wish to spend the night in the house of our enemies with only one friend on our side. We therefore protested that our business called us to Subiaco, that the following morning we might go to the upper convent to say our Mass in the holy cave; but that we could not accept their hospitality. This appeared so unnatural to the good monk that he insisted on taking us back to St. Benedict's, saying that we could attend to our business in the town of Subiaco the following morning. We were firm, however.

But he insisted. "Reverend Fathers," he said, "your conduct seems to me unaccountable. You are

returning from our house, but because you have found no one in it, as we were all at *passeggio*, you refuse to go back with me and to receive our hospitality. You must have some reason for acting so strangely. Perhaps you have met some of our Fathers on the road who passed you by without a word. Many of these have lately come from Spain expelled by the revolution, and they do not as yet speak Italian. No doubt, you have mistaken them for Italians, who would all be most happy, I assure you, to entertain you, and will not understand how you can decline my invitation."

This dispelled the mystery and we were delighted to escape from the vicar general. A quarter of an hour later we were in the room of the prior, who learning of our plight ordered refreshments for us, of which we partook with relish in a room near his own. He kept us company as did also the Father who had brought us back to the convent and for the next hour we laughed over our escapade. The prior, who by-the-by was a Frenchman from Lyons, said that before he was a religious, while he lived in the world, he occasionally went to dramatic exhibitions, but had seldom witnessed a more ludicrous comedy. Some day he would have his novices and students dramatize the incident during their summer vacation.

Then began a conversation in a much more serious tone. The good prior, adverting to the arrival in Italy of many Spanish Benedictines, remarked that the persecution against religious Orders in Europe, particularly in countries formerly Catholic, such as Spain and Portugal, indicated a universal design to destroy them root and branch. Protestantism had begun the work in northern Europe during the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries and monastic life had nearly disappeared from England, Ireland, and Germany and Protestant Switzerland. In the following century, namely the eighteenth, infidel France in the course of a few years had effectually extirpated from her soil all the monastic institutions, both male and female, which had flourished there for more than a thousand years. Now the turn of Spain and Portugal had come as well as that of all their former colonies. He told us that when he felt a vocation for the religious life he left France and came to Italy, though he knew that his native country was already full of female convents springing up almost independently of civil authority, and that some religious Orders of men, that of the Jesuits in particular, were reviving also, but in a half concealed manner. He thought that Italy was a safer place for the practice of the evangelical counsels than any other Catholic country in Europe. He had then no idea that before the end of his life a sudden change of the same character would take place in fair Italy. He now saw that the deluge would arrive before his days were ended, and though at the time of my visit—in 1836—the Roman States appeared to be secure to the Papacy for a long time, something inwardly told him that even the Institute of Holy Benedict would not escape the storm, and would perhaps disappear at the very place of its cradle, the sacred spot on which we happened to be talking together at the moment.

When he thus spoke his face was sad. I begged of him to look at the bright side of the question, for being naturally of a very sanguine disposition I imagined there was a bright side to it. I held that the religious Orders could never be destroyed because the Church

herself who needed them had the promise of perpetuity. I made him remark that even then—in 1836—religious life was springing up again in all Protestant countries; that in France, in spite of its total disappearance during the great Revolution, it was again beginning to flourish and even to produce much abundant fruit. His own religious Order would soon start again into life, and I spoke of the presence of Dom Guéranger in Rome, of which he had heard, without knowing the nature of his projects. I knew that in Spain and Portugal a violent storm was then raging against religious institutions. But I was sure that this would be a renovation and not a destruction. I went over all the consoling thoughts that had passed through my head during the last few years. Still I could scarcely bring a smile on his good-natured face.

He returned to the idea he had set forth a short time before, that the whole history of the persecutions against monastic institutions proved the existence of a deep and universal plot against them. He attributed this mainly to the Masonic and Carbonari Societies, of which he knew a great deal more than I did. For I had not, at the time, any correct idea of their ramifications throughout the world, nor of the influence they had already acquired in the political and social world. I had read years before Barruel's *Mémoires du Jacobinisme*, but I fancied that the good Father had indulged in some exaggeration, but I was mistaken. The views of the Benedictine Prior of Subiaco, which coincided with those of the celebrated Jesuit, appeared to me too gloomy, and I could not imagine that on the very day we were talking together the whole of Europe was endangered by dark mines ready to be filled with

explosive materials to spread destruction everywhere. When our conversation was ended, and time came for retiring to our rooms, I thanked God that hope remained still within me, and that I was not fully convinced of what I had heard expressed so strongly by a better informed man. It had been arranged that after spending the night in the monastery of St. Scholastica, I would go up with Zuliani, early the next morning, to say Mass in the *Sacro Speco* of St. Benedict on the top of a hill.

The ascent is steep, rocky, rugged; briars and stunted fir-trees border the road on both sides, but the day was bright. The sun, just risen, threw a tint of gold or deep purple on the whole landscape, the air was cool, and an abundant dew had refreshed the dwarf shrubs and humble plants over which we trod. We soon reached the portal of the church. An interior staircase led us into the cave, which had long ago been changed into a sanctuary. Back of the main altar the surface of the rock has been smoothed down and polished and archaic frescoes have been painted. Unfortunately we could not examine these through lack of time.

A lay-brother was waiting for us, and had been directed to serve our Masses. Zuliani told him to leave us alone; we would alternately help each other at the altar. When we had finished our devotions an aged Benedictine invited us to breakfast and proved to be a very kind host. He expressed his regret that in the past the Orders of the Church had not at all times been united in friendship and harmony, and though the Jesuits and Benedictines had never been at enmity there had been times when they had not been as harmonious as they should have been. "But now, thank

God," he added, "all this is changed, I hope for ever. The attitude of the Church's enemies is so threatening that it would be folly in us not to be closely united, and not to stand shoulder to shoulder as soldiers on the field of battle. This is now the case, and I am sure it will continue for a long time, or rather as long as we exist in the Church of God."

Then Zuliani began to speak of the close union existing in Rome between the children of St. Benedict and those of St. Ignatius, and took the liberty of reminding the old Father of the kind spirit which led Pius VII, who belonged, as every one knows, to the Benedictine Order, to lay the foundation for it. This appeared to surprise our host, who had, strange to say, never heard the story. But, in fact, he had never lived in Rome and had gone to Subiaco from Monte Cassino, where he had made his novitiate. Here is Zuliani's story:

On the eve of St. Ignatius' day, 1815, the year after our re-establishment, our Father-General went to pay a visit to the Holy Father, and invited him to grace by his presence the festival of the following day. It happened that when the visit was announced to Pius VII, who of course expected the invitation, he was engaged with the General of the Benedictines, and instead of dismissing him he begged of him to stay and be present at the interview. To the respectful request that His Holiness should go to the Gesú the following day, he answered that he was not able to do so owing to a serious indisposition; but the Father-General of the Benedictines would take his place and represent him on the occasion. He hoped that this first meeting at the Gesú would be followed by other meetings in the same place and at San Callisto, because it was the

wish of his heart that his own Order, which he loved so well, should remain for ever closely associated with the Society of Jesus, whose re-establishment he considered as one of the important events of his pontificate. "It was impossible," said Zuliani, "that there should remain the least shadow of mistrust between two religious bodies whose hands had been joined by so good a man as Pius VII. From that day to this, on St. Ignatius' day the General of the Benedictines dines at the Gesú, and on St. Benedict's day the General of the Jesuits sits at the table at San Callisto, and on all occasions a truly fraternal feeling exists between the two Orders."

This little story mightily pleased the good man, who said that it deserved to be written in letters of gold and preserved in the archives of both Orders. He would certainly tell it to all of his brethren who had not yet heard it.

Breakfast had long been finished before all these anecdotes and reflections were ended; and it was high time for us to inspect the various parts of the monastery, because we could not stay longer than this day; in fact we intended starting on our return the very next morning.

The first place we visited was the garden, to which a few steps from the church led us. It had been dug out of the rock, and a level space of nearly half an acre had been laid out with great labor by the help of the pick-axe and crow-bar, since this had been done long before gunpowder was known in Europe. The sight from the road leading to this magnificent platform of granite was most extensive and enchanting. What struck us most of all were the numberless roses in full

bloom which were everywhere scattered about. Roses on both sides of the alleys, roses in large groups in the middle of square beds, roses along the walls, roses hanging from the surrounding rocks, roses everywhere, their fragrance filling the atmosphere as if a cloud of incense was continually rising from the consecrated ground of Benedict toward heaven.

Like other travellers, I did not fail to pluck a few of the finest roses, which I placed within the pages of a book to dry. Some I sent to a few friends in Nantes, but they could neither enjoy their native beauty nor inhale their sweet perfume.

I have said that from the road leading to the garden we saw an extensive panorama of the country around. High mountains of the most grandiose shape in the distance; nearer, rounded hills covered with fir and deciduous trees, forming the last grade of the Apennines toward the east; between them delightful valleys rich in agricultural products; in the valley the last and diminutive confluents of the Anio looking like threads of silver embroidered upon the deep emerald green of rich meadows; here and there a peasant's cottage, a roomy farmhouse, a village church, and ruins of monasteries. Delightful, indeed, is the country which twelve hundred years ago was the cradle of the Benedictine Order, which saved, cultivated and beautified Europe after it had been ravaged by barbarians.

While enjoying this magnificent view a bell resounded from the belfry of the monastery. It was the Angelus calling the brethren to their dinner. The prior had sent us an urgent invitation to dine with the community, which we readily accepted. We found the whole community waiting for us in the refectory. They

were only eight or ten, all of them Italians. The fare was simple but abundant.

I had but few opportunities to become acquainted with the many off-shoots of the Order of St. Benedict. The Camaldolese founded at Camaldoli in Tuscany by St. Romuald in 1012, formed two distinct branches of the religious tree under the same head or general, one the Hermits and the other the Cenobites. Both are contemplative Orders. The Hermits, however, added manual labor to prayer and meditation, and the Cenobites in course of time devoted a good part of their time to study. Gregory XVI, who had belonged to this Order, was, as is well known, a very learned man.

Of the Hermits I knew only that which I heard from others, that they led an austere life, each monk living apart from his brethren, and never forming a community except at church. They surpassed even the Carthusians in their seclusion from the world. The disciples of St. Bruno lived in small houses contiguous to each other, and could receive their friends from the city at stated hours during the day. The anchorites of St. Romuald lived in small cabins spread at random under the trees or stunted shrubs of the wilderness. They had in my time, I think, a monastery in Rome, beyond the Palatine hill, and on one occasion it was pointed out to me at a good distance in the country. I saw also once or twice some of these monks in the streets of the city, whither they had come for business. Their remarkably austere garb and face struck the beholder with reverential awe; still their dress appeared to me less strange than the much more familiar cowl and sandals of the Capuchin or the discalced Carmelite. But I never ex-

changed a word with any of them, and never crossed the threshold of their solitude.

The house occupied in Rome by the Cenobite Camaldolese is much better known to me, not only on account of having often passed it during my afternoon rambles, but particularly from a visit I paid to it with the intention of saying Mass in their church, which is dedicated to St. Gregory. Their convent is built at the foot of Monte Celio, very near the Colosseum and not far from St. John Lateran, consequently in the old part of Rome which is mostly in ruins. It was formerly a Benedictine monastery and St. Gregory the Great, before he was raised to the Papacy, lived in it and always considered it as his house. Outside of the monastery walls a hall is still preserved in which he received the poor and the pilgrims from foreign countries. Ancient frescoes represent him washing the feet of the poor people and distributing among them his charitable gifts. It was, I think, in the same convent that St. Austin and his companions lived in retirement before they were sent by the Pope to England, so that the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons was planned and prepared on this spot. The church, which presents an imposing front, but is a modern structure, often attracted me in my rambles, and it was a pleasure for me to pray within it, and there to reflect on the great things this church had witnessed in past ages.

To this sanctuary, now in charge of the Camaldolese, I went early one day from the Roman College, with a companion, to say my Mass at one of the altars in the church. As soon as we entered the sacristy a venerable man came to us with a smiling face, and as we apologized for having come without even a word from our superior

he protested that there was no need for it. Our habit was sufficient to open for us every door in the house. Every little incident that happened at this first meeting was a proof of the deep feeling of affection entertained by the monks of St. Romuald for the Society of Jesus. But there was at the same time such a degree of refinement in the manners of this good man that it would have been difficult to find the same amenity and perfect good-breeding even at the court of a prince.

With a few words scarcely audible to us he directed two brothers there present to prepare everything necessary for the Holy Sacrifice. At the Roman College I used to say my Mass in the room occupied during his life by St. Aloysius, which had been changed into a chapel. But unfortunately it was situated in the noisiest part of the city, in the midst of active trade. At St. Gregory of Monte Celio the first elevation of the hands and heart to God called forth feelings of devotion undisturbed by the outside world.

After our thanksgiving we were taken to the common refectory for breakfast, and to our great surprise we found that a considerable part of the community came to bear us company. Still we were nobodies, only two students of the Roman College whom devotion had brought thither. The only attraction which brought these good Fathers around us was the fact that we were Jesuits. In all my experience in Italy I remarked that all pious souls felt irresistibly attracted toward the members of our Society. This happened in the very house which had during many years harbored the noble man who had become Gregory XVI. He

was then governing the Church with that prudence, vigor, and straightforwardness which have made of his reign a glorious epoch for Catholicity, and in the midst of our conversation I fancied he was still one of those who surrounded me.

## CHAPTER VI

### ST. ANDREW'S NOVITIATE

I ENTERED the novitiate at Rome, where I found myself separated from the world, at the end of November, 1835. This was practically my first acquaintance with the Jesuits. If I speak of them more at length the reader will find this quite natural. A filial and consequently affectionate regard dictates what I have to say. Nothing was simpler than the life of the Jesuits, nothing plainer than their object, nothing more manifest than the means they used to realize their objects. With pleasure I speak of the life of the Jesuits—a very sincere pleasure for me when I recall so many happy days spent in Rome with them—a truly unalloyed pleasure, since the recital of it cannot fail to edify my readers.

It is needless to add that I shall speak of the reasons which led me to join them when I was already a secular priest and four years after my ordination. As I have said, this is not an autobiography, and I would shrink from publishing what must be kept entirely between God and me. Any man, however, who knows something of human nature and of the working of grace knows that men do not enter a religious Order to satisfy worldly aspirations, and that to do so for worldly purposes would not only be desecration, but also an act of folly sure to lead to disappointment and to regret. I practically knew nothing of the Jesuits when I entered

the Society of Jesus, and consequently all I saw among them was new to me. They had no house in Nantes. Their only novitiate in France was at Avignon, at the other extremity of the country. I had never heard any of them preach except Father Gondelin, who once in my time gave a spiritual retreat to the clergy of my diocese and who pleased me exceedingly by his simplicity, unworldliness, and unaffected zeal. I had not been educated by them, knew that they were hated and despised by many of my countrymen, and if some of my friends admired them and spoke well of them it was on account of what they had done for the Church before their suppression by Clement XIV, and not on account of their obscure labors in France since their restoration by Pius VII. No one expected that they would soon take a prominent position in France as preachers and teachers. So far the only preacher they had produced was Father McCarthy, who was scarcely known to be a Jesuit, and who became distinguished as an eloquent Irishman born in France rather than as a member of the Society. These preliminaries are of some consequence with regard to what is presently to follow.

On the 27th of November, 1835, after a protracted visit to the Very Rev. Father-General Roothaan, I presented myself at the door of the novitiate (*S. Andrea al Quirinale*) and was taken directly to the room of the Rector, Rev. Father Maurizi, who received me with open arms. He was a man a little over sixty with a pleasant countenance, refined and most simple in his manners. He spoke no French at all, but I could understand his Italian, which he pronounced very distinctly *ore Romano*. Born and educated at Camerino,

he was ordained before he entered the Society, and had been placed at the head of the novitiate a few years before I entered it. I soon heard from some of my companions that in the house all looked on him as on a mother. No more appropriate title could be applied to him. If I am permitted to say a word of his spiritual direction as master of novices, candor requires me to state that of all the directors of conscience I had in my life, and one of them was M. de Courson, two have been prominent in my eyes for their mildness as well as carefulness, and these were Father Maurizi and Father Leziroli, who was then Spiritual Father at the Roman College and became my confessor the year following. I had heard, of course, of the laxity of casuists among the Jesuits, but I had discrimination enough to see no laxity in the guidance of those two excellent men, but the true spirit of the Gospel proclaimed in the Book of Wisdom: *Attingit a fine ad finem fortiter et disponit omnia suaviter.*

Father Maurizi, after a few moments of conversation, took me first to the *coretto* of the church dedicated to St. Andrea for a short visit to the Blessed Sacrament, the first thing to be done on entering any Jesuit house, and afterwards led me to the former room of St. Stanislaus Kostka, which had been changed into a chapel in the old part of the edifice built by St. Francis Borgia. I instinctively prostrated myself in front of Legros' impressive statue of the young saint represented reclining on his couch at the moment of his death, his eyes directed towards a painting on which is depicted the vision he had at this the moment of his death, namely, the Virgin surrounded by other female saints and angels coming to take him to heaven. Kissing

Façade of the Church of S. Andrea, Rome.

with fervor the feet of Stanislaus I placed myself under the guidance of him who was to be my model in the novitiate, and rose filled with emotions and desires. Then the good Father took me to the cell in which I was to spend a year, and left me there until the young man who was to be my particular friend and adviser during the first days of my stay should arrive. The cell was small and old, since it was one of those built by St. Francis Borgia when this novitiate was opened in Rome. The rooms contained in the more modern part of the edifice constructed by Acquaviva are much larger and apparently more commodious. Father Bresciani, then Minister in the house, told me one day that the humility of St. Francis Borgia was typified in all the buildings he erected during his life and the brilliant thoughts of Acquaviva could be seen in whatever he did. As to myself I preferred my cell, such as it was, to any of the grander ones. In my opinion it typified better the aspiration for lowliness and a prayerful spirit naturally engendered in any one who quits the world to live alone in God's house.

Any one who enters the Jesuit novitiate first spends a few days in total retirement until he puts on the habit of the Order and begins to follow the common exercises of the house. This is called the first probation. The candidate spends the greatest part of his time in his cell with some few books of devotion, and some manuscript information is placed in his hands for his direction. He takes his meals alone, prays, hears, or says Mass, and walks in the garden apart from the community and converses with no one except the young novice who is assigned to him as a companion. In Italy this solitary companion is called the guardian angel of

the candidate, and as I was already a priest, the one assigned to me was also in Holy Orders. I think his name was Predelli of Piacenza, but am not sure. There were in the house four novice priests before I entered; I was to be the fifth. We never associated with the young novices, who were nearly thirty in number, except to assist with them at the prayers, meditations, and other pious exercises. We also took our meals in the same refectory with them. But we always took our recreations apart, and went in couples to the *passeggio* in the afternoon by ourselves.

After the first probation was over and I had put on the habit, I took a great liking to this new kind of life which can be described in a word by saying that it was "a total separation from the world." During the whole year I spent in this holy house I never heard anything of what was going on outside of it. This seclusion went so far that none of the stirring events which took place in France from November, 1835, to November, 1836, was known to me until long after I left the place. On one occasion, however, Father Maurizi told me in a private conversation that Fieschi had been tried, convicted and executed for his attempt to murder Louis Philippe, and that the unfortunate man had died repentant and received the Sacraments of the Church. The history of my country and of all Europe during that year would have been a total blank to me if I had not read subsequently an account of the most important things which then happened. The only persons in the house who knew anything of what was going on outside the walls were the Rector, his Minister, Father Bresciani, the Procurator, Father Cocchi, and the teacher of the juniors. This formed

the community aside from the novices and the juniors; and as they took their recreation together in a room well known to us, they could speak of passing events and had for their own information a small Italian newspaper which I saw sometimes on their table but at which I was not allowed to look for a single moment. Father Bresciani, who often took me as his companion at *passeggio* in order to speak French, never, that I remember, told me any news, though he often spoke of the strange life he had to lead during the twelve years after he entered the Society on account of the persecution of the Austrian government, by which he was literally pursued from place to place in order to force him to return to his native city, Verona, and become a secular priest.

The object of religious life is well known. It is to sanctify one's self in order to labor for the sanctification of others. The novitiate, which is properly the entrance to it, is entirely devoted to the spiritual progress of the candidate and all its exercises are directed to that end. Nothing contributes to it so much as the entire separation from the world which is its chief feature, and I soon began to feel how keen the moral sense becomes when the door is shut on all the ordinary distractions which beset even the sincere Christian in the midst of life in the world. But there was in the house of *S. Andrea al Quirinale* a peculiar atmosphere of simple piety which not only prevented any kind of weariness, but invested life with an extraordinary cheerfulness. There were at the same time interesting historical reminiscenses, daily views of a bright spiritual world and the distant prospect of a useful career, not to speak of heaven, the last and chief reward of a well-

spent life. Above all we were constantly reminded of the young saint who had led such an exemplary life in that abode. When I came back from my afternoon *passeggio* I often, when knocking at the door, pictured to myself Stanislaus arriving on foot from Poland and presenting himself to Francis Borgia, who then lived in that house. What an entrancing sight it is when the previous history of the young Pole and of his tedious journey is known! His features, so familiar to me from the portrait I daily saw in his former room, were sufficient to fill my soul with the sweetest delight, and as the part of the house where I lived was the one in which he lived himself, it was easy for me to imagine him living still and going up at my side through the humble corridors and old stairs of that part of the building to a narrow cell contiguous to mine.

It was this thought which threw such a bright glow over the walls and poor furniture of the dear nest in which I rested. Besides the door and the corridors of the old house there was the garden, in which I could never walk without fancying that Stanislaus was near me. It was the scene he had looked upon during the last eighteen months of his short life; the same pure sky, an emblem of his heart; the same distant plain of Frascati and the same glorious hills of Albano. In his time, no doubt, as in mine, orange and lemon trees flourished and bore their fruit all around him and the blackbird whistled softly in the spring and the brilliant tints of the goldfinch and the oriole fluttered around their nests in the thick bushes of the garden. But there was one spot more sacred than all others near which I often walked and meditated on the days of his pil-

grimage upon earth, a spot connected with his history and of which the traditions of the house preserved the memory. This was the fountain of overflowing water in which, as his biography relates, Stanislaus used to cool the ardor of divine love with which his heart was burning. From the foot of the fountain looking southward Stanislaus could see the sloping side of the Viminal near which St. Peter must have dwelt, and on the other side of the valley arose before him the taller Esquiline crowned by the stately basilica of St. Mary Major. Often in summer when the rule obliged us to take our recreation after supper in silence I sat on some ruins still visible on the Viminal, listening with delight to the majestic tone of the bells calling the canons of St. Mary Major to prayer. Invariably on such occasions the blackbirds of the neighborhood which had their nests in the orange and lemon groves loudly whistled their tunes, excited as they were by the resounding chimes, and their soft treble harmonizing with the more solemn peal of the bells produced music which I had never heard elsewhere.

But were there not shadows thrown occasionally over these realms of light? No doubt there were, though seldom. If all the world had vanished except the small space contained within our walls I can scarcely believe a single moment of our days would have brought back to our mind the thought that this is but a vale of tears. There was surely within each of us the old Adam still alive, and the chief part of our exercises consisted in taming the unholy desires which break forth occasionally as long as man is not a saint. But we had so many means of sanctification within our reach and all of us, I am confident, had from infancy

been so well trained to overcome moral evil, that if virtue is not only possible but easy anywhere, it was so in that holy house. What with our daily occupations, frequent communings with God, kind exhortations from our dear master of novices, and the alluring examples of saintly companions it could be said we were privileged beings and few indeed on earth were bound to thankfulness as we all were in *S. Andrea al Quirinale*. But besides the spiritual combat which must be incessant for each one so long as he remains on earth, there were causes of grief which I am sure each of us felt in his moments of deepest meditation.

If there was a wall around us, we all knew there was a wicked world outside of that wall and its din reached our ears even in that blessed solitude. When walking occasionally in the alley of the garden running along *Strada Pia*, just opposite the walls of the Quirinal Palace, I was sometimes struck with the dread presence of evil so near the bowers of our Eden. I had sense enough to know that there were many good souls walking along the splendid thoroughfare, and when I footed it myself during *passeggio* I often saw men or women entering the various churches which lined both sides of it, and whenever I myself went into any of them I saw many worshippers absorbed in adoration and prayer. But how many others were bent on unholy purposes! How many carried along by swift horses in gorgeous carriages thought only of pleasure and the satisfaction of their passions! The world is everywhere the same; and in the city of the Popes in the very centre of Catholicity the majority, yea the great majority, openly discarded the practice of God's Commandments and pursued the path of wickedness.

I remember a long conversation I had on that subject with my new friend Tiberio Soderini, to whom I had been assigned as guardian angel when he entered among us. Soderini had left a splendid position in the world and in the Church to become a novice among us. Though only twenty-five years of age and ordained a couple of years before, he had already been a monsignore, prebendary of the chapter of St. Peter's, and a favorite of Gregory XVI. Born in Rome of a family well known in history and romance, he knew the world in which he moved and could speak of disorders of which he never had partaken, and of the views of life held by the majority of the people, both native and foreign, in the capital of Christendom. When it became bruited that Soderini was thinking of becoming a Jesuit, his best friends remonstrated with him as if he were on the point of doing a very foolish act. "Why," said some of them, "do you not know that your prospect is brilliant and if you remain in the world you may be on the way to the Cardinalate?" True, l'abbate Palotta and several others applauded him for leaving the world; but Palotta though a saint might show more wisdom, etc., etc. Soderini, however, found another man who approved his intention. "*Amico mio,*" said Pope Gregory, when Soderini first opened his mind to him and asked his permission, "*meliorem partem elegisti.*" This was worth a thousand opinions of worldly prelates.

That this averment of Soderini was true I soon had, I may say, an ocular demonstration. One afternoon I was taking the usual *passeggio* with my young friend when in the *Via delle Quattro Fontane* we met the carriage of the Pope, who was walking in front of it

with several prelates of his court. As we were ahead of him we had to wait in order to let him pass with his retinue and stood hat in hand near the line of houses so as to leave the sidewalk free. What was my surprise to see Gregory, as soon as he perceived us, walk straight towards Soderini, preventing him from kneeling, actually embracing him, nay hugging him as if he had been a baby, asking him at the same time how he liked the novitiate, and on the assurance given by the young man that he was perfectly happy: "*Ve l'ho detto bene, caro mio,*" said the Pope, "*meliorem partem elegisti.*"

Soderini in his conversations gave me not only the description of the bright side, but also that of the dark side of Rome. He told me among other things, what subsequent events proved to be correct, that if the majority of the Romans were not great sinners and if comparatively few led a life of reckless vice, many of the middle class especially were more than lukewarm in their faith and doubtful in their morals and in fact cared little if the Holy Father was in danger or not of losing his temporal power. The staunch friends of the Papacy were openly called *Papalini* by way of derision and the friends of the Pope were found to be few in number and dwindling more and more in influence and activity. "My good Lord," I exclaimed, "the time, therefore, is not far off when the royal crown will be snatched away from the head of the Pontiff. For if the Romans care so little for Papal right, foreign princes and kings will do very little to preserve a power which is not supported at the centre." But I concluded that if this was the condition of Rome then, great corruption must have existed in the capital of Christendom before this to allow the heart of his sub-

jects to be thus alienated from the head of the Church. "You may be right," Soderini said, "but as I had little to do with those classes of society I had always imagined that the number of very corrupt people was very small."

Just then a band of music composed of brass instruments passed along Strada Pia. It was a lively tune and we could not guess what was the occasion of it. But it produced a profound impression of sadness on me. "I would prefer a dirge," said I; "it would agree better with my feelings." Soon after we separated. So, as I have said, there were shadows even over the bright atmosphere of holiness which we had the happiness of inhaling within our walls.

Secret societies were at the same time undermining the soil of Italy though we heard nothing of this in the novitiate. Gregory repressed them as far as he could, but they cropped out everywhere, chiefly in the eastern and northern provinces of the States of the Church. How long would it be before the final explosion would take place? No one could say, but every one thought that as soon as the power of Louis Philippe in France would be brought to an end, and this in the common opinion could not be delayed much longer, the upheaval would recoil on Italy as well as on Germany north and south. All intelligent Italians were persuaded that French fickleness had not been cured by past events and the Gallic bombast would soon again break forth as on previous occasions when open insurrections took place.

I had a queer proof of it during the few days I spent in Rome before going to *S. Andrea di Monte Cavallo*. I was mailing a letter to France. Though I had inquired

about the locality of the post-office, I lost my way before reaching it, and meeting a well-dressed young man in the street, I asked him in very bad Italian which was the place for mailing letters. The young man took me to be a Spaniard and replied in good Spanish that he would be my guide as he was going thither himself. In walking together, he politely asked from what part of Spain I came, and when I answered in my own native language that I was a Frenchman, and was just coming from Brittany by way of Paris and Marseilles, "*Vous en venez tout droit?*" said he. "*Oui, Monsieur.*" "*Alors vous pouvez me donner des novelles de la dernière insurrection des Parisiens; quel est le nouveau gouvernement provisoire?*" "*Vous badinez, Monsieur,*" I answered, laughing, "*mais vous avez cent raisons de le faire, car la grande nation est maintenant une sotte nation.*" At the conclusion of this short dialogue we found ourselves at the post-office. We shook hands heartily and never saw each other again. To understand the possibility of such an improvised conversation in Rome it must be said that there were then in the capital of Christendom highly educated people of a truly cosmopolitan character who could speak fluently most of the European languages; though so bright an example of it was not common, and I never met the like afterwards.

So far Father Maurizi's share in the work of training those under his charge has scarcely been spoken of. For those who have passed through the same discipline in a novitiate of the Society my story is old. But it may interest the general reader. Nothing is more simple than a Jesuit's ordinary life, nothing plainer than its object, nothing more manifest than the ingenu-

ousness of the means employed for carrying out that object. This strikes a newly arrived novice at the very threshold of his new home, particularly if his previous life has been more than usually full of incidents and his experience of a diversified character. The more simple his new life is, the more he is charmed with it. He does not find it monotonous; but the very simplicity of everything around him is a novelty which he did not expect and which pleases him more than the excitement and variety of his former life. I felt this instinctively, but not so much as a young Frenchman who was placed under my care for a few days as Soderini had been.

His name was Roger. When Father Maurizi called me to his room to speak of this new case, he told me in private to be very particular about that young man, who had excellent qualities and had received a thorough education, but he had seen a great deal more of the world than I had. "I am afraid," said the good Father, "that he will find himself out of his element on account of our monotonous existence, and that he will be tempted to neglect the grace of God, who certainly brought him hither." With these directions I joined young Roger. Our conversation became lively; but I noticed that he did not like to speak of his travels and of the adventurous character of his rambles. He preferred to speak of Rome, where he had spent several months before making up his mind to become a priest and a religious. As Rome was an agreeable theme to me I found it easy not only to attract his attention, but to give him a better hold on his good resolution. After two or three days I ventured to allude to the exceptional position in which he found himself—alone

in his cell for the greatest part of the day with bare walls and a couple of rush-bottomed chairs, a plain pine table with a couple of books with an inkstand and a few sheets of paper to write down some of his reflections; no company except myself during his recreations. But in a few days he could converse with friends besides myself and his occupations would be less monotonous and less tedious. Here he interrupted me. "You mistake my feelings. The days are very far from being monotonous and tedious. The simple life I lead here is enchanting to me on account of its very simplicity and of my total separation from the world. For I have had a surfeit of worldly amusements in my travels and I am thoroughly tired of moving from place to place. For some time I have longed for solitude and I find it here as I desired. All my hours are well employed and I find a real delight in following the orders of the day given me by Father Maurizi. Rising early and every day at the same time; undisturbed prayer in the most complete silence; plain and wholesome food taken in moderation; serious reflections on my previous life which my soul sadly needed.

"Is not this a happiness preparing me for a more useful career than my former prospects offered me? As to what you say of the bare walls of my cell, of the two rush-bottomed chairs and the pine table it contains, I must tell you that this plainness and simplicity make it dear to me; for I am sick of soft lounges and rosewood furniture and could not sleep on those artistically carved bedsteads furnished with luxurious mattresses and pillows. Now I fall asleep on my cot as soon as I stretch myself on it and I can write better

on that square table than I could on the shaky octagonal Italian inlaid tables which I used in the hotels in Florence and Rome or in the splendid villas of patrician families. As to the books you speak of, they should surely please me. They are the New Testament and the Imitation of Christ, and I am sure that you appreciate the treasures they contain. I had read them previously, for my education was what is called thoroughly Christian. But I confess that since I came here the few pages I perused opened my eyes to many things which I did not understand before."

I was happy to see that he understood the purpose of the novice's life. The conversation then turned again on the simplicity of this life, which had so much struck and pleased young Roger. This simplicity appeared not only in the rules affecting the physical life of the Jesuit, but likewise in the spiritual training of the soul and in the adaptation of man's faculties to the work on hand. In speaking of the external life of the Jesuit the rule says: "The members of the Society in matters affecting their external life all follow the same rule. Accordingly rule 30 declares that in providing for the wants of the body care must be had that temperance, modesty, and decency both interior and exterior be observed in all things. Let grace be said before and after meals, etc.," and rule 46: " as too much solicitude in things appertaining to the body is to be avoided, so moderate care in preserving our health and strength of body for the service of God is praiseworthy and to be had by all. Therefore when the members find that anything is injurious to them, or that they need something out of the ordinary, in the way of diet, clothing, occupation or exercise, and

the like, let them give notice of it to the superior, or to him whom the superior shall appoint for that purpose." Therefore they live under a common rule. Still if they should have extraordinary needs, these are provided for. This shows the good sense which dictated the rules and which keeps them in force till the present day.

I could not but admire the well-balanced system followed by those who ruled over us, if system it could be called. Our spiritual development was constantly progressing, but nature was neither overwhelmed nor treated like a treasonable enemy. But as long as the law of God controlled the cravings of the body a certain outward liberty was accorded to us. This was felt in every part of the house except in the chapel. Everywhere else an honest, modest, decent freedom in outward practices was the rule. No forced mysticism, no soaring into the realms of imaginary space; to strive to excel others in these respects would have been disapproved on the spot. Singularity must be avoided; this was a rule rigorously enforced. The aim and tendency of the spiritual training are expressed in the rules which assure us that our spiritual life is helped by a horror of everything that the world loves and that we must accept all Christ Our Lord loved and embraced.

As worldly men love and seek honors, reputation, and the credit of a great name upon earth, so those who are advancing in spiritual perfection and follow Christ Our Lord love and desire what is contrary to the ideals of the world. And the details which are given immediately after are condensed in a single phrase of the twelfth rule. " Let it be each one's chief

and most earnest endeavor in all things so far as he can to seek his own self-denial and mortification." This might suggest a life similar to that of the old Fathers of the desert. But as all this is to be done for the greater glory of God, it is plain that this mortified spirit must not shock the people who are to be influenced for their spiritual good, but must attract them gently to partake of the same spirit. This is the divine policy of the Gospel and the constant practice of Christ Himself, who though preaching the highest perfection and giving the example of it, always led a simple life and condemned the conduct of the Pharisees.

Immediately after my entering the novitiate at the end of November, 1835, in order to prepare us for the following festival of Christmas, Father Maurizi besides the ordinary instructions on the rules began a series of evening meditations on the birth of Christ. A few chapters of the Gospel chiefly from St. Luke were to furnish the text of more than twenty of these exercises. I was greatly struck by his conception of Our Lord at the beginning of His mission upon earth. It was a comment on the eleventh rule presented so attractively that the soul was naturally drawn to this life. I was greatly impressed with the artless effusions of Father Maurizi especially on great occasions such as the thirty days' retreat he gave us after Easter. Men of the world must think it tedious for young men like us to be shut up in the house during a whole month and go through the Exercises of St. Ignatius.

A few days after this retreat the pilgrimage of which I have spoken above took place. I shall here speak of some incidents not before given. The pilgrimage is one of those exercises of the novitiate which are called

*experimenta*, and are peculiar to the Society of Jesus. Their object is practical; they are intended to accustom the young religious to the vicissitudes of an apostolic life. Consequently when he takes the pilgrim's staff, it is not only to go from shrine to shrine and become a holy wanderer in order to satisfy the cravings of his religious feelings, but he must stop on the way to preach the word of God, reconcile sinners, and strengthen the faith of the believer. Before we started from the novitiate on the morning of May 26, 1836, Father Maurizi gave us the instructions for the trip which have been mentioned already.

My companion on this pilgrimage, as I have stated, was Father Zuliani, a remarkable man in more than one way. We became great friends in the novitiate, as he was, like me, a novice priest, and I soon became well acquainted with him. He taught me Italian, which he spoke well. He was a good speaker even when he preached extemporaneously. His delivery was almost perfect and his features, which were refined and expressive, added vigor to his words. I seldom heard a preacher who pleased me more; and he became a very popular pulpit orator. He taught me enough of Italian to teach Catechism to the children and to hear confessions.

Our stay in Tivoli, however, was only one of amusement. The day which followed our coming was a recreation day for the college, and the whole community went to the country-seat except the Rector and Father Sineo. This very remarkable man was then residing in Tivoli previous to his going to heaven, and as I had already heard of him I felt happy to have an occasion of seeing him and conversing with him for a few moments.

As he was then a "Veteran," this peculiar feature of the Society, until that time unknown to me, became of great interest to me. I do not now remember if Father Sineo della Torre—this was his full name—had belonged to the Society before its suppression. Only a few years before I knew him he had been Provincial of the Roman province. Being now old, though not infirm, in the full possession of all his faculties, he had been relegated to a small college in a very small town and was there only a Veteran. Father Sineo had his confessional, attended sick persons in town, and perhaps had the care of some female convent in the neighborhood. But the weight of duty was light on his shoulders; all the inmates of the house were ready to assist him when he needed assistance, which happened but seldom, I am sure; and, what he considered the best of his privileges, he had sufficient time to prepare himself for his departure from this world. This last object is always the first in view when an old man among us is put on the retired list. Father Sineo appeared to enjoy greatly his new position in the Society when I knew him.

At Tivoli I became interested in a curious mediæval institution which still existed at that time in the Roman States, that of hermits. My companion called my attention to a man dressed in a coarse but clean garb almost like that of lay-brothers among Franciscans. He was working quietly with the gardener and at the time was pruning a hedge. I learned that throughout the country along the Apennines there were still a number of men devoting themselves to the service of God in that peculiar way. I heard that no one could adopt such a life in the States of the Church without

the permission of the Cardinal Vicar of Rome. Certainly the license of the Cardinal Bishop's substitute in the diocese was necessary. It was never granted to a young man, but only to men well advanced in years, whether bachelor or widower. A recommendation from a well-known and worthy ecclesiastic was also required. When these conditions had been fulfilled a district was assigned to the new hermit with well-defined limits, beyond which he could not go. This was probably intended to prevent contention between men of the same calling contiguous to each other. In the district assigned to him a house was appointed where the hermit should sleep and reside when he did not go out to beg. There he was to help the gardener or the man of all work or to make himself useful in any other way. For these services he was to receive nothing but his lodging. For his food he was allowed to go out begging in the villages of his district twice a week. Receiving from farmers or other poor people crumbs of bread, fruits, vegetables—never any money—he brought back home what had been given him; he lived exclusively on it.

The hermit could not evidently be called a beggar. He prayed for those who thus helped him, and his lowly benefactors had faith in his prayers and were not impoverished by the trifles they put in his bag. In the intercourse between the hermit and the peasants there was invariably a reciprocity of courtesy and simple affection. They knew each other and became friends and excellent neighbors. The good manners of the country people which struck me during my excursion were, no doubt, chiefly the result of God's grace; but the friendly relations between the lower

classes of the population and the religious of all Orders contributed to the peace and happiness of an immense number of people. It is needless to add that some religious practices were imposed upon the hermits to help them to persevere in their vocation. They were not properly religious and I suppose did not take any vow except perhaps privately and individually, such as are called simple vows in the Catholic Church, which any lay person can pronounce with the advice of the ordinary confessor. There was no church attached to the villa where the hermit resided. But in the neighborhood there were several to which he went to pray, to hear Mass and receive the Sacraments.

At Arsoli the parish priest received us with open arms. A week's stay there convinced me that a country curé in France was far more comfortable than a parish priest in the dominions of the Holy Father. At Arsoli the table, the rooms, the bed chiefly, were far inferior to what I had seen in the curés' houses in the neighborhood of Nantes. But the good Italian priest did his best in the circumstances and both Zuliani and myself were duly thankful for the care he took of us.

Besides the *parroco* and his curate there were two young priests living with their parents in the village who had been ordained, I suppose, *titulo patrimonii*. They seemed to have nothing to do except to say Mass and appear in the church whenever there was any function. They might have been usefully employed in teaching a school. So I thought, but I was very careful not to say so. The children, however, deserve to be noticed. We spent three days with them before the feast of Corpus Christi and as they were not numerous our acquaintance with them was sufficient to form a

judgment of them. They were not numerous, I said, scarcely one hundred and fifty in all. Their sprightliness, quickness of perception and intelligence, in general, were far superior to what I saw in children of peasant families in France. It is said that all the little ones in Italy are like pretty angels until they grow up, when they become deformed imps. I will not try to explain this assertion, in fact I must confess that I scarcely understand it. The children we had to instruct in Arsoli, though poorly clad, were certainly very interesting to see and hear. They were precocious and most of them were quite innocent. They were from ten to thirteen years old. We had no girls of eighteen or twenty preparing for their first communion. The adult population, however, over thirty years of age presented a very different picture. They appeared to have degenerated and to have already reached the decline of life. Our short stay forbade my investigating the cause of this phenomenon.

The month of October following, I had an opportunity to study somewhat the morals of the lower classes in Rome. During that month, while the rich go to their country seats, the people amuse themselves by going to some suburban places of amusement around Rome. All their savings throughout the year are made to provide the means for these October enjoyments. As has been remarked by all travellers, they seldom drink to excess; but they often quarrel and sometimes in their excitement they use the dagger. Accordingly, men who have been wounded in these brawls are not rarely met with in the Roman hospitals during October, and sometimes the cases are fatal. For this reason some novices of S. Andrea were sent every day to the *Spedale*

*della Consolazione*, one of the largest in Rome. I do not mean to say that all patients in that hospital had been guilty of these excesses. The majority of cases were the result of accidents or of constitutional diseases; but nearly every day some man or other was brought in who could accuse himself of having been the cause of his own misfortune. This was another *experimentum* for the novices, more interesting to me than the pilgrimage, though far less pleasant. The young novices were sent to make the beds, clean the wounds, wash the bodies of the patients, and make themselves useful generally. The priests of the novitiate attended to the spiritual welfare of the wounded. This was their *villegiatura* or vacation, and each one had to go five or six times during the month.

*Le Ospedale della Consolazione*, adjoining the Forum at the foot of the Aventine and in the neighborhood of the Capitol, is one of the smallest of similar establishments, since it contains only one hundred and fifty beds. It was the only place to which we were sent in that October. At some other time I had occasion to visit the *Ospedale de Santo Spirito*, containing 1600 beds, in which medical cases, chiefly those of malarial fever, are treated; and also that of St. John Lateran, containing 480 beds, in which women only are received. These two last institutions are far superior in splendor and thoroughness of management to the *Consolazione*.

The exterior of the building was plain and scarcely announced what the interior presented. I have heard since that it has been considerably enlarged by Pius IX; but, such as it was in my time, I was struck by the loftiness of the halls, the perfect neatness of all the apartments and chiefly the purity of the air owing

to perfect ventilation. In general I have remarked in the hospitals of Rome a complete absence of that foul smell which I had been subjected to in many French institutions of the same kind. In the most conspicuous part of the largest hall an altar had been erected with a canopy over it supported by slender columns so that it could be seen by all the patients. Every morning Mass was said on this altar and during the whole day the towering cross over the tabernacle—or what took its place, since the Blessed Sacrament was not, I think, kept in it—seemed to extend its protection to the sufferers stretched on their clean beds. The few women who were admitted into this hospital occupied a smaller hall.

The novices did not visit this part of the institution; the men being much more numerous gave sufficient occupation to the young Jesuits. While, therefore, our young men were washing with warm water the faces, hands, and feet of the patients, or giving them their food and medicines, my companion and myself—we never were more than two priest novices—walked from bed to bed and engaged in conversation with the sufferers, preparatory to hearing their confessions and calling the chaplains of the establishment for the administration of the Sacraments. Confession was never urged, except in cases of visible need; we only warned them and they were free to do as they pleased. When the case was urgent, all the motives, of course, which could make impression upon them were vividly presented and I have never seen a case of refusal. At the hospital of the *Consolazione* I never met with the least difficulty in such cases. The conversations held at the first meeting with them were of

great interest to me, because they gave me an insight into the feelings of the Roman people in the lower class of society. As the great majority had been brought to the hospital in consequence of accident or because of some constitutional disease affecting the exterior organs, their presence in that house did not indicate any crime or even any fault on their part. They were simple laborers or workmen or small retail vendors who had met with some casualty in the streets or in their houses, and it was easy to judge from them what was the moral condition of people of the same class in Rome.

I can truthfully say that in all my intercourse with them I have found them an orderly class, full of affection for their families when they were married, and morally far superior to the same class of people in the great cities of France. They all knew their religion well and were strongly attached to it. They were particularly distinguished for their devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and when this is the case there is in the heart an ever-gushing well-spring of high morality and of all the refined feelings connected with our best nature. Those who do not know the true spirit of Catholicity, which always highly fosters the veneration and love of Holy Mary, cannot form any conception of it.

I saw no signs of the abject poverty such as I remarked among the peasants. They appeared to be well fed though they were very poorly clad. The only grievance of which they complained was the taxes they had to pay to the government. They altogether disbelieved me when I told them that they paid far less taxes than any other nation in Europe. When I reminded them that they were Catholics, that the head of their

government was the Pope, whom they invariably called *Il Santo Padre,* they always replied that they loved the head of the Church and disliked only the government. I could never make them understand the identity of both.

But the interest I felt in my visits to the hospital of the *Consolazione* was chiefly concerned with the small number of those whom the commission of crime, or at least the indulging of moral excesses, had brought within its walls. Often, perhaps nearly every day during October, some luckless or desperate fellow was transported in a carriage or a hand-barrow to one of the wards assigned for such persons. Some of them had been stabbed; some struck down by the blow of a muscular *Trasteverino,* and others had injured themselves while intoxicated, though these were very few. Unless they were dying it was useless to go near them and speak of confession. For they were still so mad with passion that they were deaf to every appeal of reason. The chief vices of these men were, first, a fearful habit of cursing; there is scarcely anything in any other language like the vocabulary of oaths and imprecations found in the popular tongue of Italy. Secondly, dreadful outbreaks of anger or rather of rage rendering them incapable of restraining their passions. Thirdly, an almost total neglect of the practices of religion, though faith was not entirely dead in them. Fourthly, a total disregard of the conventionalities of life, so that they appeared like savages in the midst of a refined and Christian community.

These enormities were associated with many smaller vices as their natural consequences. But when the fit of madness was over, they became manageable and

susceptible of true repentance and reformation. I remember particularly the case of a young man who was brought one day with a wound in the abdomen which had been inflicted by one of his boon companions. The doctors declared that the wound was fatal. When after a few hours of rest this news was imparted to him, tears began to flow and he became repentant. He was completely changed and religion revived in him. He could receive all the Sacraments after having publicly pardoned all his enemies, particularly the one who struck him. His sufferings were at times intense, but he offered them to God as an expiation for his former life. He was young, scarcely twenty-two, and unmarried, and his parents came with some of his relatives, who in the midst of their grief felt consoled to see him die a Christian. Still his manly frame promised him a long life and his limbs excited the admiration of the beholder by their harmonious proportions of true beauty.

## CHAPTER VII

### A VISIT TO SAN COSIMATO

The latter part of May, 1836, as I have explained, at the end of our thirty days' retreat, I was sent with Father Zuliani from the novitiate on a pilgrimage to Subiaco as one of the usual *experimenta* prescribed in our constitutions. It was one of the last pilgrimages from Rome, undertaken according to all the old rules of the Society. A year or two afterwards it was thought proper by the superiors of the Society to give another form to the *experimentum* of pilgrimage. For my part, I was delighted with all the incidents of our trip.

When we had paid our homage to holy Benedict in the cave where he had spent the first years of his religious life, and there was question of returning, the Benedictine Fathers told us that as the weather was very hot—it was, I think, the 11th of June—we would do well not to say Mass in the convent the following morning, but to start long before sunrise, and walk leisurely to a place called St. Cosimato, half way to Tivoli, to say Mass there and take our breakfast with the Franciscans who had a convent in that village. It would be easier afterwards to reach Tivoli where the Jesuits had a college and a church. This advice was followed, and I was thus furnished with an occasion of becoming better acquainted with the Minorites.

When we arrived at St. Cosimato both Father Zuliani

and myself remarked that in going up to Subiaco we had seen that monastery, but did not stop because we had need of nothing at that time and wished to reach the end of our journey in good time. But there were a pair of eyes in the convent that had seen us, and the owner of the eyes was highly displeased at our unceremonious way of passing by the convent. This time we stopped and rang the bell. The door was soon opened by a little Franciscan who had already said Mass and breakfasted. On our asking permission to say Mass he willingly, though coldly, gave it, and without any inquiry as to our character—our dress evidently guaranteed that—he led us to the church, prepared everything, and even proposed to serve our Mass. We begged of him to allow us to do so alternately for each other, and he withdrew.

At breakfast the explanation of our conduct a few days before naturally opened the conversation, and though we did not know that he had seen us previously, Zuliani told him the truth and gave him the reason why we had not even paid him a short visit. Then the go d little man brightened up at once, and though certainly he had so far acted very charitably towards us he henceforth appeared highly delighted and ready to do all in his power to please us. "Fathers," he said, "your apparent indifference to our poor house had sadly afflicted me, and I concluded from it that what is sometimes said of you might be true, namely, that the Jesuit Fathers are proud, and do not like to associate with the other Orders, but what you say is enough for me and my heart is with you." I thought proper to say a word here, and as I had already been six months in a Roman house I was beginning to speak

Italian much more fluently than I did with the Franciscans of Leghorn. "My dear brother," said I, "not only we would not be true religious if we were pro d, but it would show in us very little appreciation of true greatness, should we undervalue the immense service your Order has rendered to the Church. You are much older than we are, and you had a host of martyrs and saints long before our name was known. We would be ignorant, indeed, if we were not aware that the Minorites had a glorious history and had deserved well of the Church. At this time even you are far more numerous than we are, and you cover still all the shores of the Mediterranean with your religious and charitable houses. If we were animated by feelings of worldliness we might envy you the possession of the Holy Places of Palestine which the Church has confided to you since the Crusades; but to despise you—we would indeed be fools to harbor such low thoughts."

It was pleasant to see how this little speech, which was as sincere on my part as it was true, produced a happy change of feeling on the good Friar. If he had embraced us and proposed to invest us with the Franciscan scapular it would not have surprised us. He did not do this, however, but he made us promise to stay with him a good part of the day, and to resume our trip to Tivoli and Rome only in the cool of the afternoon. This program was a piece of good luck for us, for the spot was full of historical and artistic instruction.

First, our new friend made us acquainted with the convent in its present condition. It was a Franciscan rural monastery whose object was the duty of seeing

to the spiritual and temporal welfare of many villages in the neighborhood. Taking us again to the church, which contained nothing very remarkable except some traces of a high antiquity, he pointed out the choir of the religious back of the sanctuary. There was, as usual in Franciscan convents, a semicircular row of stalls beautifully carved, and before six of those in the centre of the semicircle stood six stands on which remained open as many large quarto breviaries to read the Office with ease. The monks in Italy were not yet compelled to use a pocket duodecimo for a breviary, as even the canons of cathedrals often did in France in my time. There was still, even in rural districts, the old mediæval display of magnificence. All the woodwork was elaborately carved, the vestments were rich, and the books grand specimens of typography. Delightful arabesques headed their chapters, no mere miniatures, as was the custom before the discovery of printing, but splendid black and red letters still shining on the parchment after many years of daily use.

I did not remark at first that there were six big volumes open on the stand, as if the Office had been said that very morning by six monks and there was but one in the house. How was this? On asking this question our guide replied: "Yes, I have five companions, but except on Sundays, when we are all here, it is seldom that there are six in the house, and to-day it happens that I am alone." Then he told us that they had under their charge a large district which during the week they visited for the instruction of the people, chiefly of the children, and for the administration of the Sacraments to the sick. When there were three

or more in the house they said the Office in common, otherwise each one recited it privately.

Thus the Franciscans of the Observance, who are the lineal descendants of St. Francis, continue in this age to take care of the Christian people, exactly as they did in mediæval times. And this is not the case only in Italy, but wherever they go, as I saw years after at Winsted, Connecticut, in the midst of a mixed Irish and Yankee population. It seems that even the sects of Freemasons who rule at this moment over the beautiful peninsula, holding Rome itself in their grasp, have not yet succeeded in driving them all away by cutting off their supplies.

From the church we went back again to the convent in order to examine it more in detail, and here the interest of our exploration considerably increased. The church, it was said, showed some signs of antiquity, but the house was the very expression of it, and by closely looking at it, you were transported to the distance of at least a thousand years back, exactly as the house in Nantes in which I was born. The Brother explained that it had formerly been a Benedictine monastery. Every Catholic priest who reads his breviary knows that St. Benedict, after having spent three years in a cave at Subiaco, founded twelve monasteries in the neighborhood; in one of them a monk attempted to poison him, but when the saint made the sign of the Cross over the poisoned cup it broke into pieces and the poisoner confessed his crime. The Friar told me that this was the very house in which this incident had happened and in confirmation he showed us a fresco, the chief features of which could still be traced. On one of the walls of the house

the scene had been represented during the earliest period of Italian painting. The painting, of course, is much more recent than the time of St. Benedict. These legends gave an intense interest to the time I spent in this ancient monastery. From the convent the good Friar conducted us across a field towards a deep ravine which formed the limit of the monastery grounds.

At the bottom of the ravine, at least sixty or eighty feet below the level of the adjacent land, ran a rapid stream—the Aniene, I think—over a rocky bed. Here the water foamed and resounded with the deep noise of a miniature cataract. The kind Franciscan led the way down the perpendicular bank of the river, by means of stone steps cut with the chisel in the side of the precipice, and soon we found ourselves on a narrow ledge of rock. It was a road cut in the rock to give access to the interior of the hill. On our right we found an opening like a small door which allowed us to enter into a wonderful apartment. It was composed of three small rooms communicating with each other and they all had been hewn out of the rock. The three rooms had been a monk's cell and it was easy to distinguish the one in which he had slept, for it had a deep indentation in one side as long as a human body and two feet wide. Going back from this apartment, as it has been called, to the above-mentioned ledge we were introduced by the Friar into a second room contiguous to the first and then into a third, and a fourth, etc., all being nearly alike, so that the narrow ledge formed as it were a street leading to each and all of these small subterranean houses.

To complete this description it suffices to say that

after going through the entire street some more stone steps led us down to another ledge almost like the first; and afterwards to several others, until the bottom of the ravine and the bed of the river were reached. This set me thinking, and I naturally asked myself what this could have been. The Franciscan, I think, simply told us that it had been the beehive of austere monks who lived in this place long before the monastery, in which he himself resided, had been built, but I could not banish from my mind the idea that this was in truth the first monastery founded by St. Benedict when he came from his cave at Subiaco. There were in these subterranean places no signs of furniture, doors, or windows. The monks had probably some stools or benches on which they could sit and rest when reading or meditating; but there was no evidence of their having been protected by an enclosure of any kind; no holes in the hard rock for securing hinges or bolts; no appearance of windows or curtains having ever been hung up for the purpose of giving them light nd saving them from exposure to cold, rain, or wind. This beehive, I like the word applied to monks' cells, is an eloquent page of the primitive history of asceticism in Italy.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE ROMAN COLLEGE

On the afternoon of November 3, 1836, Father Maurizi took me to the Roman College, I was to spend the year in study there and the classes were to be resumed on the following day, the feast of St. Charles Borromeo. I was taken to my room, which was on the south side of the institution over a small garden that was enclosed on all sides by lofty buildings. A graceful palm tree grew just under my window and during winter I could not suffer from cold, as my room was exposed to the sun the greater part of the day. In Rome the sky is almost always clear, winter and summer, and the sun's heat is always more pleasant than that of a stove or grate.

As a good number of our young Fathers and scholastics were coming like myself to occupy their quarters for ten months at least, the atmosphere of the college differed greatly from that of the novitiate. Instead of peace there was animation and bustle. I knew nobody in the place, but as soon as I had paid my visit to the Rector, Father Benetti, I was introduced to four young Fathers who like myself were to follow the course of the fourth year of theology. These were Ballerini, Predelli, Mislei, and Liebel, the first three Italians, the last a German.

My object here is to give an idea of the normal studies pursued in the Society. In the novitiate nothing was thought of, spoken of, and done except what concerns the soul and the things of God; in my new home, though the spiritual life of the religious was not forgotten, still by far the greater part of the day was employed in hard study limited for each one to the peculiar line assigned to him, yet embracing in its complexity nearly all the branches of human knowledge. Of politics, public events, disputes of parties, furtherance or repression of revolutionary schemes, etc., etc., we knew absolutely nothing. During the whole year I did not see a single daily paper, or even a solitary periodical of any kind. None of us would have been allowed to study science in reviews or magazines; we were confined to the study of the sources of theology, namely to the Fathers of the Church, the great theologians of previous ages, the mediæval philosophers called scholastics, and the best commentaries on Holy Scripture. We were not permitted to use the great library of the college, which was open only to the professors, but we had a private library of our own comprising more than four thousand volumes, mostly in folios and in quartos with a mixture of octavos.

I had so much to do that I could not even think of profane or sacred literature. Wishing, however, to know Italian better than I did, I always carried with me to class a small volume of Dante, with copious notes which I read with great interest before class began; I was nearly always in my place a quarter of an hour before the professor came. I may here remark that, apart from the students of theology, more than a thousand young Romans from ten years old to eighteen

came every day to the college for their classical studies. I had scarcely any occasion to see them. These were instructed in a part of the college quite distinct from ours, and I had no time to inquire how the Greek, Latin and Italian classics were taught in those classes. But I learned that the young men who entered our novitiate after having gone through their Rhetoric there could speak much better Latin, speak Greek much more fluently, and speak with more ability on their national authors than the boys I had known in Nantes at the end of their collegiate course, either at the *Petit Séminaire* or the *Collège Royal.* But I can speak more understandingly and with more copious details of the higher studies pursued at the Roman College because I was in the midst of them. Since in our day science—mathematical, physical, chemical, and miscellaneous—is placed at the head of human knowledge, I must first say a few words about these branches of study.

At the time I was in Rome, the department of astronomy was in the hands of Father De Vico; that of pure mathematics under the charge of Father Caraffa; the professor of chemistry and physics was Pianciani; Christian archæology was illustrated by Marchi; and under these eminent men a number of able assistants in the same branches of study gave to these various classes a degree of efficiency which, in my opinion, was not equalled in Paris, where I went the following year, so far as pure mathematics and astronomy are concerned. The course in astronomy, since the Roman College was given back to the Jesuits, I think in 1828, had been under the charge of Father Dumouchel, a Frenchman who was a pupil of Lalande in Paris before

the Revolution. Dumouchel was certainly an able astronomer, but he was getting old when the observatory was put in his hands and his chief endeavor had been to form young men who would be able to replace him in teaching; and one of them, De Vico, became celebrated.

In 1837, when I was an inmate of the house, he had a European reputation. Among the pupils whom he was training, Secchi had already distinguished himself. I never, it is true, attended the lectures on astronomy, but we students of theology were well acquainted with the frequent discoveries of the young and modest Professor Secchi. When I went to Paris the following year, the name of Arago was not only familiar to all Frenchmen, but was known throughout Europe. Nevertheless people said that he was rather lazy, and I think I remember that the only course of astronomy he taught was patronized chiefly by ladies who flocked to his lectures to be amused by his elegant exposition of popular science. Though the Paris observatory was far better appointed and furnished with appliances than that of Rome, still more important results came from the latter than from the former; and Arago himself, who was a most fair and just man, acknowledged it a little later.

When our colleges in Rome were closed in 1848 by the Revolution and the professors were dispersed, Father De Vico came to America and I knew him intimately. He himself told me that when he passed through Paris on his way to the western continent he went to see Arago, with whom he had corresponded for a long time. The great French scientist overwhelmed him with attentions, and several times urged

him to remain in Paris. He promised him a most brilliant position in France where he would have everything he could desire for the prosecution of his work. In America he would scarcely be able to obtain the instruments needed for it.

From Father De Vico's class of astronomy I pass to Father Caraffa's lectures on mathematics. I never attended any of them; but every month or two the students gave an exhibition on the questions which had been dealt with. There were about twenty of them, intelligent young Italians of eighteen or twenty years of age. I could follow their long and intricate operations on the blackboard because I had studied nearly all the branches of mathematics at Nantes, where I had frequently assisted at the examination of young candidates for the *Ecole Polytechnique* and the various schools of engineering which at that time flourished in France. I confess I was surprised to witness in Rome such evidence of mathematical ability in pupils so young. The next year at Paris I followed the same course of instruction in pure mathematics under Moigno and Charles Aubert and sometimes had occasion to attend the class of Poisson at the *Collège de France*. Of course I would not place Caraffa above Poisson as a mathematician nor declare De Vico to be the equal of Arago. I speak only of the relative results of their teaching. Poisson, who with Cauchy was then considered the greatest mathematician in Europe—at least the French said so—had a class of four young men in the most celebrated college in France, and Caraffa had twenty in Rome whom I considered fully equal in mathematics to Poisson's pupils. The class of higher mathematics in the Roman College answered

exactly to the class taught by Poisson in the *Collège de France.*

The other branches of science in Rome were under the charge of Pianciani, who taught chemistry and physics. His lectures on acoustics could not be so interesting as those of Savard, whose discoveries on the laws of sound and on the properties of all vibrating substances at that time excited the wonder of learned men. Pianciani was not a great discoverer; but he was an excellent teacher and by his experiments the laws of physics and chemistry were as beautifully and accurately illustrated as I saw them the years following under the instruction of Pouillet, Savard, and Dumas in Paris. The Jesuit professor covered the work of three or four illustrious men with only two or three assistants, and he could not receive from the Papal Government the large sums allotted by France to the experimental classes of the Sorbonne and the *Collège de France.* It was said at that time that Savard was awarded an extra sum of thirty thousand francs a year to help him in his researches on acoustics. With all these drawbacks, the pupils of Pianciani fell little short of the attainments of my fellow students at Paris.

Nature and her laws formed only a small part of the studies pursued in the Gregorian University, as the Roman College was called. The class of philosophy embraced a course of three years, and the chief professor was Father Dmowsky, a Pole. At that time philosophy in Europe had ceased to deal with the great problems concerning God and man except in the Catholic schools, which made no noise in the world. Bonald and de Maistre did not discuss all the subjects connected

with metaphysics and ethics. Lamennais' system had been condemned; and St. Thomas' name was scarcely pronounced, though the Catholic professors for the most part still followed the scholastic method. But in the Protestant or Rationalistic universities of England, Germany, and France many professors had ceased to believe in the true origin and constitution of the human mind. Empiricism was thought to be the explanation of all knowledge; the analysis of exterior or interior facts alone must be consulted. The existence of God, they thought, could scarcely be demonstrated. Even in England, though Materialism and Atheism could not then as much as show their heads, the only philosophy taught in the schools was that of Reid and Dugald Stewart, who chiefly renewed and developed the Baconian system of experimental inquiry. In Germany Emmanuel Kant had laid the broadest basis of skepticism in his *Critic of Pure Reason.* If in his *Critic of Practical Reason* he appeared to contradict himself and restore to conscience and the moral sense a great part of their domain, this did not really remedy the evil.

This was the state of German philosophy in 1837 when Father Dmowsky was teaching at the Roman College. The more revolutionary doctrines of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, which were at that time exciting the German universities, did not attract much attention in Italy, where men thought these systems could not stand the test of time and no one suspected that their Pantheism would develop into the Atheism and Materialism of our day.

In France the founder of Eclecticism, Victor Cousin, had already ceased teaching. He had still the title of

Professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne, where he never appeared. The year following my studies at the Roman College I could not find an opportunity to hear him, though I was anxious to do so. Condillac's system, which for the last sixty years had reigned supreme in all the state schools of France, had been so effectually swept away by Cousin that no one spoke any longer of his "animated statue." Henceforth for a number of years in the University of France no philosophy was required in the examinations for degrees, except a meagre sketch of fanciful theories, most of them exploded and unworthy of serious attention.

Father Dmowsky, whose class always numbered from forty to fifty young men, critically examined all those baneful errors. But he attached a peculiar importance to those of Kant, which were more dangerous in his opinion than the more recent ones on account of their plausibility and the apparent candor with which they were expounded by the philosopher of Koenigsberg. Dmowsky was not alone in that holy warfare. All the schools of philosophy in Italy, being more or less under the control of the Church, pursued the same path and prevented the revolutionary doctrines which have invaded other European nations from acquiring an extensive foothold in the peninsula.

Of all the studies pursued in the Roman College that of theology was considered the most important. The number of its professors was the largest and its cognate branches the most numerous. I became better acquainted with its method, economy, and discipline because I was a student of theology and was constantly associated with the numerous pupils of its various classes. Manera and Perrone were the professors of

dogmatic theology; Curi of moral theology; Patrizi of Holy Scripture and Hebrew; Ferrarini of polemics; Van Everbrock of ecclesiastical history. Patristics and sacred eloquence were encouraged but left to the care of the students, most of whom made frequent use of the excellent library placed at their disposal. Perrone and Manera were the most conspicuous professors in the school. The name of Perrone has become known since to the students of dogmatic theology throughout the Catholic schools of the universe, and his erudition, his strict scholastic method, his copiousness of details require no comments. But Manera, who is now scarcely known, in my time enjoyed in the Roman College a far greater reputation than Perrone.

The rector of the college, Father Benetti, had told me that as my object was to prepare myself for examination at the end of the year, I could not be obliged to follow all the classes of theology, and for dogma, for instance, I could be allowed to choose either of the two professors. To make my choice I consulted various friends. I had already had some interviews with Passaglia, a student of the second year who seemed to me extremely bright and well informed. I asked him his opinion. "By all means," he said, "go to the class of Manera. You will not find with him cut and dried subjects methodically arranged and little bits of erudition taken here and there, but the man has a head far deeper than the other. He is worthy of being placed among our great theologians of former times. Let him live long enough and his works will rank with those of De Lugo and Suarez." He was a small man, not taller than I am. He always arrived as soon as we were all seated in our places and went

modestly to his chair. His forehead was large for his stature and his eyes beaming with intelligence. But as he was then deep in thought, preparing to address us, he never looked around, but sat quietly without moving. The treatise which he explained during that year was the one on "Grace." He generally brought a volume or two for reference during his class and placed them aside on the platform. But he gave out his lessons from notes which he had previously written on a sheet of paper. I always looked at him intently when he was thus speaking and admired the closeness of his reasoning and his wealth of illustrations from texts of Scripture and of the Fathers, particularly St. Augustine. He never stood up, never made gestures.

His lecture lasted a little more than half an hour. Then we prepared to write the matter of the next lesson which he had laid down on another sheet of paper and which he handed over to a student seated near him. As soon as this was copied by us the class was over. There never was any question asked or answered in class. The discussion was postponed to a later hour when each class met in a circle, as it was called, to go over the matter developed by the professor in the morning. The professor was always present at these circles. With the monthly public exercises before the whole class, they gave to the students such control of the mental faculties and of language that after a few years of this training it is not a wonder they could lecture themselves and become able professors of the subjects they had thus studied. Few, however, could hope to reach the perfection which distinguished the lessons of Father Manera. Whenever I heard him I

imagined I was listening to some of those great men who in previous ages have made of theology a well-spring of the highest thoughts, the most entrancing speculations, the truest interpretations of Christian dogmas. Manera was not an unworthy successor, as Passaglia had told me, of Suarez, De Lugo, Valentia, and Petavius, though on account of the limits within which he was confined by the necessity of his class, he could not develop his ideas with the same profusion of details and the same richness of illustrations.

I sincerely regretted that time did not permit me to commit to paper, as soon as I reached my room, what was still fresh in my memory and preserve for my future use the full development of the treatise on Grace such as I had heard it from his lips. I had to prepare theses on the whole of philosophy and theology and I could not write anything but what was connected with my examination. I was also privately engaged in the study of St. Thomas, both of the *Summa Theologiæ* and his *Summa adversus Gentes*, in which I found an admirable compendium of what was then my chief study. During my theological studies in France I had scarcely heard of St. Thomas and the consequence was that I did not know theology. In the few months of retirement which were given me I could not master such a variety of subjects and could scarcely make a general survey of that great field. I succeeded, however, in getting a slight idea of it and could say at the end that I had not lost my time entirely.

My time, consequently, in the Roman College when I was there in 1837 was not uselessly and unpleasantly employed. Our minds were bright, our imaginations warm, our hearts at peace, though we were as much

separated from the world as I had been the year previous in the novitiate. But among ourselves scarcely any conversation took place except on the subject of our studies and the little incidents which varied the monotony of our days.

Besides theology I followed the class of Hebrew taught by Father Patrizi; but I did not assist at his course of Holy Scripture. The Hebrew class I needed because I had intended to study hermeneutics afterwards more thoroughly than I had done under the Sulpicians. My Hebrew studies were limited that year to grammar and to the translation of a few historical passages. Patrizi was a great writer on Holy Scripture; but as he wanted to exhaust everything which he studied he was naturally very diffuse. The year before I went to the Roman College he had commenced his interpretation of the New Testament and he had spent the whole year on the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. The genealogy of Christ would have filled a good-sized volume if it had been printed. This did not suit me as I was to remain only for a short time at Rome. I was sorry to deprive myself of the lessons of the good and learned man, whom I admired and loved for his simplicity and good nature. He carried his simplicity so far that though he belonged to one of the noblest families in Rome he refused to entertain any communication with the outside world. Nay, he went much further. He had a brother who had also devoted himself to the Church without becoming a religious and remained a secular clergyman, and Father Patrizi had, of course, no objection to receiving his visits and visiting him himself. On the contrary, being naturally of an affectionate disposition, he loved

his brother tenderly and gave him every proof of affection. But gradually the rumor spread that Gregory XVI intended to make a cardinal of the young prelate, who was not only distinguished for his refined manners and varied accomplishments, but also for his piety and deep attachment to the Church. Father Patrizi's modesty was shocked as if the dignity had been intended for himself, and he did not conceal from his brother how ardently he desired that both should remain in a less conspicuous position in the Church and work in modest retirement. Monsignor Patrizi, I am sure, sympathized with his brother's views. But the Pope urged him to accept and it was announced that at the next creation of cardinals young Patrizi would receive the red hat. The Jesuit Father was inconsolable. He visited his brother in order to make a last effort to prevent this, telling him that if he were made a cardinal as rumored there could be no further intercourse between them. The promotion, however, took place and Father Patrizi would not see his brother afterwards. Cardinal Patrizi became Vicar of the Pope in Rome, led a holy life, and died two or three years ago lamented by all.

I seldom took part in the circles because I was merely studying in private for my examination. But I assisted at all of them and I must say a word about them to give an idea of the Roman curriculum of studies. Once a week an animated debate took place among the students of theology in presence of one of the professors in place of the usual evening circle. I have very seldom seen the professors interfering in the debate; and I must say that it was always carried on with fairness and keenness. I shall describe a circle in which

I took part. The subject of discussion was transubstantiation in the Holy Eucharist and the object to show that the real presence supposed transubstantiation. My friend, Angiolini, a student of the second year, was intrusted with the defense of the thesis and I had to urge the objections against him. Angiolini did his part with a great deal of ability. He knew his Perrone by heart and made an exposition of it with a great deal of clearness. But the usual objections given by Perrone had not pleased me when I read them and I thought I would find stronger ones in Calvin. I had never opened his Institutes before and I have never as much as looked at them since. I was at liberty to take the objections against the dogma wherever I pleased and the stronger they were the better. So I presented Calvin's objections.

Angiolini was quite unhinged and unmanned, to my great regret, and his answers were so weak that I was bound to insist and to develop at greater length the opinions of Calvin. This lasted until the hour assigned for this exercise was over and the meeting broke up without any solution of the difficulty being given. Meanwhile Father Perrone was sitting quietly at the head of the class and uttered no word. He evidently thought I was arguing fairly, otherwise he would have interfered and called me to order, which was the only thing his office as president obliged him to do. The only one in the class who gave any vent to his feelings was Antonio Ballerini, who became afterwards so celebrated as professor of moral theology. As was said previously, he was then, like me, a student of the fourth year and was sitting near me when I stood facing my adversary. Whenever I quoted a text of Calvin

stronger than usual, he appeared to enjoy it hugely; and on one occasion I heard him telling me, in a low voice: "Capital! Go on, *amico*." There was not any fear, however, this tilt should be considered as a victory for heresy. If Perrone did not protract the argument it was simply because he knew that the students themselves would the following day discuss the matter and find out the fallacy in what I had said.

As to my being taken for a Calvinist, though I spoke with great warmth, there was no danger of this, least of all on the part of Angiolini, who never showed himself less friendly to me than before. The only student who spoke to me on the subject was Passaglia, who the day after came to me and said: "How pleased I should have been yesterday to be in the place of Angiolini! I should have given it to you in pretty strong terms." "Not to me," I replied, "but to Calvin, and I would have been very glad of it."

Every month there was a much more solemn dogmatic discussion before the four classes of theology together, in one of the largest classrooms of the college. The best students were, of course, chosen for those occasions, and I have witnessed splendid encounters in those theological tournaments. They lasted two full hours, and at the end I always regretted that they were broken off or not renewed in the afternoon. One feature of these discussions which was wanting in the circles was the exposition of the subject to be brought forward in the discussion. In these introductions to the contest, the speaker was expected not to improvise and use the ordinary Latin language of the school, but to treat his hearers, if not with Ciceronian phraseology, at least in a style which a Roman could approve.

I am sure that in France such Latin discourses cannot now be heard even at the solemn distribution of prizes in Paris, when all the colleges of the capital hold a general concourse for literary excellence. One of the best professors is then chosen to speak before the public in Latin. However, I was never impressed by the elegance of these discourses. But in the Roman College all the young men who were appointed to introduce to the audience the various subjects to be discussed highly interested me by the ease with which they spoke a language which cannot be called dead in Italy, because the tradition of the old Latin culture has never been lost, least of all at Rome. Sometimes, it is true, the choice of expressions did not appear to me natural enough. Young men of talent are often too much under the spell of their fancy when they wish to please the ear of the listener. Particularly Passaglia, who several times during the year appeared before us on those occasions, made in general in my opinion too great a display of his exuberant wit. At first I greatly admired him; after a while, I preferred Angiolini's style, for Angiolini was every inch a littérateur.

The studies we pursued were not only traditional, connecting the present with the past and developing the magnificent thesis of redeemed humanity from its cradle in Eden to our own age of strife and contention, including a glance at the future when the Church shall gather all nations under her maternal wings and there shall be "one fold and one shepherd," but they were eminently intellectual also. The foundation in natural religion was a solid structure not based on conjecture and denial, as the brilliant but unsubstantial theories of our day often are. The first principles were evident

and the conclusions strictly logical. To reason had been added faith as an admirable support. It is only faith that can give to men the certainty of hope, and the possession of true love on earth as a harbinger of perfect love in heaven. Philosophy, history, Scripture, the writings of the Fathers, the speculations of theologians, the outbursts of eloquence of great pulpit orators in all nations were placed before us in that noble institution, the Roman College. For myself, it was like a spell of ecstasy throwing into the shade all my previous studies.

I must conclude these reminiscences of my stay at the Roman College by reporting a few unusually interesting occurrences. The first was an *Actus* by a young secular clergyman who had gone through his studies at the Gregorian University and was brought forward by the faculty as an honor to his Alma Mater. The second was a *Semi-Actus*, if I can use such a word, by Passaglia himself at the end of his second year of theology.

The former consisted, first of a strict examination lasting three hours in a private hall at which were present, besides the students of theology, a number of friends who had been invited, and second, of a public tilt of two hours in the large hall of the college in presence of a cardinal and a number of prelates, doctors in theology, secular dignitaries, and members of religious Orders. The young clergyman who appeared on the first occasion had spent all his life in study, though he was extremely poor, and in any other country would not have been able to go beyond the first elements of knowledge in a primary school. It is true, all could pursue their studies in Rome as long as they wished without paying a cent of tuition. Education in all

its branches was perfectly free and gratuitous. The Roman College, particularly, was endowed by the Papal government to furnish teachers of all grades with the requisite apparatus and libraries to all the youth of the city on the sole condition that they would observe order and come to the college in decent dress.

But the students had naturally to provide themselves with clothing, lodging, and sustenance, and the parents of this young man could not procure for their child these necessaries. He had found, what every boy in Rome could easily find if he had talent and good will, friends ready to furnish him all those requisites. In the Roman College there was a private room where a certain number of young men were admitted at meal times and provided gratuitously with an abundance of good things. It is true, the number of those thus admitted was limited; but many others found rich people in the city ready to help them and many also became tutors to younger boys and thus obtained the freedom of a respectable house. This had been the case with the young man who was to appear. But his present appearance demanded no little outlay which he could not provide from his own resources. Not only was he to wear a very respectable suit of clothes and the costume of his new dignity of Doctor of Theology, but at the end of the ceremony a most splendid dinner was to be served to the most distinguished guests on the occasion. A number of men had also been employed to decorate the halls and assist those present at the dinner.

A month or so before the ceremony the candidate had addressed a letter to a cardinal to invite his Eminence to preside at the ceremony. No such invitation

had ever been declined, though the cardinal knew that he had to meet all the expenses of the day, which I heard amount to several hundred dollars in American money. In the forenoon of the appointed day I attended the examination. No strangers were admitted. But all the professors of the faculty of theology were there to take part in the examination and the large classroom where it took place was full of students, either scholastics of the Society or young theologians of other houses who were pursuing their course of studies in the Roman College. The candidate was examined on the whole of theology. Though the greatest courtesy prevailed, it is clear that the examiners meant serious business. The argumentation in scholastic style was strict and to the point. Three hours of such a trial was a sure test of solidity in the studies of the young man and the title of Doctor of Divinity which he was to receive was undoubtedly well earned and would be honorably borne in after times.

In the afternoon there was still another contest lasting two hours but in a very different form. It was more a display than a contest. It was held in the presence of a Prince of the Church who came to preside at the ceremony with a great array of dignitaries and attendants. I counted more than twenty grouped around his throne to do him honor and at the same time, perhaps, to bewilder the candidate with this unusual display. But the chief source of uneasiness for him was that the questions were to be proposed not, as in the morning, by the members of the faculty whom he knew, but by any one in the assemblage.

The large hall of the college where the exercises took place was almost filled with men known in Rome

for their learning in theology, members of religious Orders, dignitaries of the Church, such as bishops, prelates of many degrees, amateur disputants, young and old—many of them eager for the fray and some holding opinions differing from those usually held in the Society of Jesus and well able to embarrass and puzzle the candidate. The young man stood on a large pulpit in front of the cardinal's throne and two professors of the University were at his side ready to protect him in case an undue advantage should be taken of his inexperience. Fortunately, on this occasion help was not needed. Only once Father Perrone, who was one of the supporters of the young candidate, had to give some explanation in order to clear up a point on which the objector insisted, though the young man had really solved the difficulty. Thus everything ended to the satisfaction of all present and from the hall the numerous assembly adjourned to the dining-room where the cardinal, having the young doctor seated near him, entertained his guests for the remainder of the afternoon.

We now come to the examination of Passaglia, which took place at the end of the scholastic year, that is to say in July. There was no examination in the morning because Passaglia had already passed his annual examination with the students of the second year of theology. The exercises consisted of a display of two hours during the afternoon in the great hall of the college. There was no cardinal to preside, the Society undertaking to patronize the young man. It was refreshing to see the young *Lucchese*—Passaglia was from Lucca—step alone into the elevated pulpit without supporters on either side but with the presence behind of several

professors of the faculty who could have come to his rescue in case there had been any need of it. The bold forehead of the champion, who was then in his prime, showed that he did not fear any one of his adversaries.

I have no recollection of the various questions discussed, but his method of presenting his views was always interesting. On the present occasion I noticed a characteristic which I had never remarked in Passaglia before. In our domestic exercises he was fond of quoting St. Augustine, whose writings he knew almost by heart. In this *Actus* the chief authorities he brought forward from tradition were texts of the Greek Fathers, which he did not as usual give in Latin but in the original Greek. I have no doubt that many who heard him understood the drift at least of the Greek he quoted; but very few if any were able to argue from a Greek text especially on the spur of the moment. Hence Passaglia had almost the whole field to himself and he could display his talents for dialectics and oratory.

## CHAPTER IX

### A GLANCE AT CONTEMPORARY ART IN ROME

During the twelve days I spent in Florence in November, 1836, while visiting the Palazzo Pitti, I met a young man who was copying the celebrated *Madonna della Seggiola.* I did not on that occasion speak to him though I admired the skill and talent his work showed. A few days later when taking a seat in a *vettura* for Rome I was agreeably surprised to find that the same young man was to share the journey with me. Our only companions were an English lady with her children and servants who found room in the main body of the carriage, so that the painter and myself occupied the *coupé.* We were soon introduced to each other and became great friends during the five days of our journey. It turned out that he was a Russian who had left St. Petersburg for Rome many years before, had married an Italian lady and settled for life in the Papal States. I could not have any one better suited to make me acquainted with the state of art in Rome, of which I knew very little. I learned from my new friend that family affairs had brought him back to his native city a few months before. On returning he stopped at Florence to copy the painting on which I found him at work. He had promised the copy to a Russian nobleman who no doubt would remunerate him. But the work was a labor of love

for him, not only from the point of view of art, but chiefly because he was a profoundly religious man and as a good Muscovite was devoted to the Mother of God. I had a proof of it when a few days later we arrived in Rome.

The *vetturino* having stopped on the Piazza del Popolo, my Russian told me that on leaving St. Petersburg he had made a vow to visit the church of *Santa Maria del Popolo* on arriving, even before going home to meet his wife, who expected him most anxiously. I was delighted to hear this, and told him that though I had made no such promise I would accompany him with great pleasure and thank God with him for our safe arrival. This was the first act of devotion I performed in the Holy City. I learned afterwards, but not from him—for like all men of talent he was modest and never spoke of himself—that Nabayeret, such was, I think, his name, was an artist in great repute in Rome. A few months after our arrival he completed a painting of St. John the Baptist in the wilderness which created quite a sensation. Gregory XVI went to see it in person to show his appreciation of true art and to encourage the artist by this act of attention. Whenever Nabayeret spoke of Rome in our conversations he was full of enthusiasm, and he spoke eloquently, for he expressed himself as readily in French as in Italian. He informed me that the Italian painters were not the best artists in Rome, though some of them, Gagliardi particularly, followed the good traditions. But the Germans he said were undoubtedly at the head and were reviving what he himself believed was the true school of Christian art. It is then that I heard the name of Overbeck, I think, for the first time.

It is now surprising to me how the French, even the best educated among them, were ignorant at that time of the principle of æsthetics. Louis Philippe was then king. The youth of the country thought of nothing but of politics. The young artists sent to the Villa Medici were often more intent on disturbing the Papal government than on becoming proficient in their studies. In France nobody then spoke of art and it is only much later that Montalembert and Victor Hugo united for once in their views, protested against the destruction of the best monuments which was then going on under the fatal direction of the *bande noire,* and succeeded in calling the attention of the government to the wholesale desecration. The clergy did not join in this protestation of two laymen, who because of their eminence were listened to by the ruling powers. This apathy of the clergy was due to their profound ignorance of everything connected with art. This went so far that the new churches which were then building were decorated with statues and paintings that were sorry specimens of the worst possible taste; and it required the pungent satire of Montalembert and Hugo to bring about a change.

My Russian friend was acquainted with the art of the world, particularly with that of Rome. In the city he knew all the schools and groups of artists and showed his good taste by preferring the German, that is, the Overbeck school. He appeared to make little account of the French, whose artistic taste was in fact declining chiefly since the time of the Revolution of 1830. He admired the great artists they had produced. "But," said he to me one day, "each nation must have its turn and it seems to me the Russians will at last find their

opportunity." He thought Russia was at the point of becoming the leader of Europe, since France could not be so any more and Germany did not seem to be on the eve of reaching the political supremacy. He was, no doubt, mistaken; but who could at that time foresee the weakness of Russia doomed to be confronted with Nihilism and the strength of Prussia with the "man of iron" who was yet unknown.

He admitted, however, as has been seen, that the Germans were at the head of art at Rome and spoke enthusiastically of Overbeck. He had not, and could not, being a Russian, join the club formed by the great man, who had already acquired an immense reputation; but he fully sympathized with the main object of this new German movement. I had, therefore, fallen into good hands in order to have my eyes open to a new field of knowledge and to learn at least the elements of true æstheticism. The circumstances of the trip also favored me. We had taken the *coupé* of the vehicle from Florence to Rome and were sure of not being disturbed during our trip. The interior of the carriage was filled by the English family mentioned above. We met only at meals, which the *vetturino* had contracted to furnish so that we might not be disturbed by any money discussion with the hotel-keepers on the way.

During five successive days, thereafter, I was alone with my Russian friend and there was nothing better to do than to talk of art. I began by telling him that I knew nothing of it and could not form any idea of the true source of beauty except that I often felt a thrill when looking at simple and apparently artless pictures of Christian scenes, especially from the New

Testament. I made him laugh by relating my experience at Nantes and Paris, and said that I disapproved of the manner of Rubens and could not be satisfied with the work of Dutch painters, who for the most part represented eating and drinking scenes. Being, thank God, a Christian, I thought that man had higher aspirations. He answered that I was on the right track and I would be heartily pleased in Rome. "But," said he, "I have seen you in the Palazzo Pitti; what do you think of that collection?" "It has opened my eyes to many things," I replied; and I added that I had only twelve days to spend in Florence.

Every forenoon I went to the Pitti Palace, and the hours passed swiftly and delightfully in those splendid rooms filled with such unequalled treasures. The Uffizi collection I had no time to study. But I found in the Pitti palace all that I needed. There I was chiefly attracted by the old masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries whose subjects inspired me with sublime religious thoughts and feelings. "Rome is the place for you," he repeated and then he told me some personal experiences which raised him very high in my estimation. For a couple of days he continually spoke of Rome and of the Roman States, for which he felt a sincere admiration from an æsthetic point of view; for our conversation always dealt with art and never a word was said of politics or other matters.

It was toward the middle of the second day that the beautiful hills of Tuscany, covered with luxuriant vines and olive-trees, began so gradually to sink and gave place to an extensive plain without limits towards the south and west. But on the east the Apennines closed the horizon by the grand curves of their summits

and declivities. My friend called my attention to it. It was a complete change of landscapes, as if we were entering into a new world. "At last," he exclaimed, "we are in the Roman States; what a joy for me!" Without him I would scarcely have remarked it; still it was, as he said, a new world. The vast plain in front, the undulating lines of the mountains on the left, the flat level of the fields on the right, extending as far as the sea, which, I think, we could perceive in the form of a long blue line whenever the road rose higher than usual, formed the frame of a gigantic picture in which a new population moved. Instead of the athletic form of the Tuscan peasant with his gigantic umbrella —for it was a rainy day—we saw in the fields stately men but much reduced in size and women clad in the unique dress of the Roman campagna.

The last harvest of the year was being garnered in—it was the beginning of November—and everybody seemed happy and contented. Above all, the quiet though tattered villages on the tops of small hills, the churches rising here and there, the small oratories at the corner of the roads, some few more stately mansions at a distance, gave an animation to the country far greater than is the case immediately around Rome. I knew that the country we were passing through was of high historical interest. It was the southern part of Etruria, which brought the elements of civilization to the bandits who according to the legend had taken refuge on the Capitoline and Palatine hills. But at this moment I thought only of Christian civilization. In 1836 reproaches were being made to the Papal government because it neglected the people's interest, and yet there was probably no place in Europe where

the people were less oppressed, more lightly taxed, and where their spiritual wants were better attended to. But we did not speak of these matters. We thought only of the picturesqueness and ideal beauty of the scenery.

So far little had been said of the state of art in Rome. He now informed me that Rome was still the true centre of Christian art in the world. Most of the European states had for several centuries sent young men to study at Rome, whose collections of both ancient and modern art were superior to those of all other capitals. My fellow traveller surprised me by declaring that the artists of northern Europe were then the leading artists in Rome, and that the galaxy of artists from Scandinavia, Russia, and Germany—Protestant and schismatic states—was the most brilliant that had been seen for a long time. He appeared to entertain the idea that the centre of the artistic world was shifting from its old place and that the frozen regions of the north would henceforth furnish great masters, as the sunny south had done in the past. This view was probably inspired by his patriotism; but I confess that in the course of his conversations he seemed almost to demonstrate it.

He said that this movement had been begun during the last century by Winckelmann, but had received a far stronger impulse in this century. There were, he said, the Danish school led by Thorwaldsen; the German school under the leadership of Overbeck, and, hinting probably of some projects of his own, there might be soon a Russian school for which he might gather the elements around himself. Being always modest, he did not insist on this last point. It is indeed sur-

prising that Thorwaldsen, a peasant boy born in Denmark and brought up by his poor parents in Copenhagen, should become, as it were, the restorer of art in Italy. Still it is an undeniable fact and was due largely to his visit to Rome, where he went in 1797. He had, no doubt, great native talent, of which he had given such proofs in Denmark that he was sent by the government to Rome for four years. Had not this happened, he might have remained an ordinary artist. He had begun to work as a painter, which was not his vocation.

His first visit to the Vatican pointed out to him the road he ought to follow. He saw at once that he was called to be a sculptor; and his ambition was stirred to obtain eminence in this field of art. But what is more remarkable is that though by birth a Lutheran, he readily fell in with the Catholic ideals of Rome. If at first influenced by the glory and genius of Winckelmann, he studied the great masters of pagan antiquity, chiefly of Greece, his aspirations were never absorbed by pagan ideals and he did not confine himself to re-create the heroes of Greek history. The great work which he executed for the cathedral of Copenhagen revealed his truly Christian tendencies. In front of the church he represented in *basso relievo* St. John the Baptist as Precursor of Christ announcing the coming of the Saviour. Around the peristyle the Sibyls and the Prophets are seen proclaiming it to Jew and Gentile. This frieze, compared to that of the Parthenon, expresses admirably the eternal contrast between truth and error; and the sublimity of the scene, which belongs more to heaven than to earth, proves better than volumes could do the superiority of the ideal in the modern artist.

In the interior of the church Thorwaldsen placed the twelve apostles, six on each side, and at the end of the edifice the colossal statue of Christ loomed up over the whole of the majesty and sweetness of the God-man. It was the grand realization of the promise represented on the walls outside. Both proclaimed aloud that "the kingdom of God" had been established forever on earth. This sublime composition pointed out to all living artists the necessity of coming back to the ideal of the *seicentisti* which had been entirely forgotten by recent sculptors and painters. For it was impossible to look at this great work of genius and not to recognize that Thorwaldsen was a pupil of those who had first adorned the Vatican and the majestic church of St. Peter. It was the same simplicity of plan and grandeur of conception.

He belonged evidently to the school of Giotto, Perugino, and Raphael. The Russian gentleman, from whom I learned all this, was a personal friend of the great master, who was still living at Rome, and he became enthusiastic in speaking of the restoration of Christian art under the lead of such a man as Thorwaldsen. Then my Russian friend spoke of Overbeck and the German school at Rome and his enthusiasm scarcely knew any bounds. This furnished him another proof that the leadership in art belonged now to the northern nations.

Toward the end of the last century and the beginning of this, several young painters in Germany opened for themselves a new path in art, taking chiefly for their models the Italian *seicentisti*. The principal among them were Cornelius of Düsseldorf and Overbeck of Lübeck; and they received the encouragement

of such men as Goethe, Niebuhr, and Schlegel. Overbeck went to Rome in 1810 and Cornelius followed him in 1811. They were soon surrounded by other young German artists, particularly Koch, Schnorr, and Schadow. Overbeck soon became their leader and to him we must look in order to understand their new ideal. He was soon impressed with the fact that the models they intended to copy took a view of æsthetics quite different from the one entertained by the majority of other artists. The latter were guided by the conviction that the imitation of the beautiful in nature must be the great aim of art and consequently that art must be cultivated for itself without any view higher than nature, while the *seicentisti* thought that religion being above nature, art must look to the religious idea as superior to mere nature.

Overbeck had thus found out the secret of the great masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of Giotto, Fra Angelico, Perugino, and Raphael. But being guided by practical sense he saw at once the consequence of his discovery. The beautiful having the same source as the true, the Catholic religion, which has always kept the standard of the ideal in art, must be true and come from God. He therefore abjured Protestantism, in 1813, with several of his associates; Cornelius had been born a Catholic and always practised his religion. The conversion of the soul from belief in a sect to the Catholic Faith is generally brought about, after the grace of God which is always the chief moving power, by a consideration of what is called the Evidences of Christianity. Here we have some highly cultivated young men who became at once firm in the Faith because they saw in it the

foundation of true art. Their example, however, is not unique.

It is said of Gros, a French sculptor of great talent in the sixteenth century, that he turned Catholic while executing in marble the statue of St. Stanislaus preserved in the Jesuit novitiate of Monte Cavallo, and the *alto relievo*, also in marble, representing St. Aloysius in the church of the Roman College. It is easily understood that since the Christian ideal of art is but the expression of supernatural truths contained in the Gospel, wherever these truths appear on canvas or in marble and bronze they come from the source of inspiration which is always flowing in the garden of the true church. The more Overbeck and his friends studied and imitated the manner of the models they had chosen to copy, the more they became convinced that they were entering into the spirit of the Gospel. The beautiful, which they had constantly under their eyes, led them to the truths which were speaking to their hearts, and thus they became and remained all their lives fervent Catholics.

Many of these facts became known to me later and some of them long after my journey from Florence to Rome. But my fellow traveller gave me a fair insight into the great work undertaken by what he called the German school in Rome. He explained to me the object Overbeck had in view when he painted the "Vision of St. Francis" for the church of the Madonna degli Angeli near Assisi. It was the complete unveiling of all his ideas. He had already executed some Madonnas, and in the celebrated frescoes of "Joseph Sold in Captivity" and the "Seven Years of Famine" he treated scenes from the Old Testament

in the grand and free manner of the *seicentisti*. The New Testament he had also illustrated in many paintings. But in the "Vision of St. Francis" he wished to express his Catholic views in the most unmistakable manner. In this noble composition he declared himself an humble disciple of the Umbrian school in the very place where the best masters belonging to it had labored—in the pious sanctuary of St. Francis. It was in the midst of the most remarkable manifestations of their piety that he desired to give expression to his own feelings of devotion and to proclaim before the world that if their efforts have been derisively called mysticism he wished to be called a mystic himself.

Henceforth he warned against all that is false in art, as there is no painting of Overbeck's that does not protest against every form of error. In history, for instance, he knew that the Middle Ages had been assailed as an epoch of darkness and fanaticism. To correct that error, he painted in 1817 five large frescoes in the Villa Massimi representing scenes from the *Gerusalemme Liberata* of Tasso. These contain the full vindication of the Middle Ages in one of their most characteristic features, namely the Crusades. His success was immediate and complete.

The Düsseldorf school, the offspring of Overbeck's work, was at the height of its prosperity when we were discussing it in the wild but beautiful country at the foot of the Apennines. Travelling in a post-coach allows the traveller to stop wherever he pleases in order to see whatever was worth seeing on the road. It is thus that we spent a whole afternoon in the Cathedral of Siena, so full of mediæval remains and of exquisite paintings of the *seicento* period. I had an excellent guide

in my companion, without whom I could scarcely have understood the beauty of these remains of former times. We stopped also at Montefiascone on the Bolsena Lake, not so much to drink of the excellent wine produced in the surrounding country, as to admire in a church the "Miracle of Bolsena" which, I think, my friend told me was a good copy of the celebrated painting of Raphael.

At Viterbo, where we spent Sunday morning, I had not his company to visit the churches. Not being able to say Mass, as I was unacquainted with any member of the clergy, I wished at least to hear it and receive Holy Communion. I therefore left the *locanda* where we had slept during the night very early before breakfast and entered the nearest church, which was crowded with devout worshippers, and felt no inclination to inquire about objects of art. When I returned I found that my companion had also gone to church. On the following day we arrived at Rome and separated with feelings of mutual esteem and many expressions of reciprocal good wishes.

These five days of slow travel were thus for me not only a source of refined enjoyment, but also an excellent preparation for judging more correctly of art at Rome. I could make inquiries which otherwise would have been difficult for me. I found, as my friend had told me, that the Germans were the artistic leaders at Rome. But his previsions as to the supremacy which he thought the northern nations would obtain in the regions of Christian art were not fulfilled. At the end of his career Overbeck found himself deserted by most of his followers. German art took a direction very different from his own, and in our day it is difficult to say what school ranks highest in art.

## CHAPTER X

### SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION OF THE ROMAN STATES IN 1836

As in the rest of Europe the population of the Papal States was divided into the peasantry, the middle classes, and the aristocracy. I saw very little of the Italian aristocracy, which never had the influence enjoyed by the same class in other European states. I will, therefore, confine myself to reporting what I saw and heard of the two other classes during my stay in Italy. Of the mendicants, who are considered by many travellers as an important part of the people, I will say next to nothing, because except at Rome, where you met them in many places, I scarcely saw any mendicants. In my travels in the Roman Campagna, and along the beautiful banks of the Anio River, as far as the frontier of the Neapolitan kingdom, they were not in evidence anywhere. The people were everywhere active and industrious. It is there that I studied the Italian peasantry at leisure and I conceived for them a sincere respect. The readers of these pages know that I had the same respect for the peasantry of France.

The laborers of the Roman Campagna were the first who fell under my observation and they were certainly the most miserable class among them. They were not properly peasants, but simple laborers. I

shall first speak of the peculiar system of cultivation pursued in the district within a radius of eighteen or twenty miles from Rome. The Popes did all they could to change that system of cultivation, but they failed. Here the land since the Middle Ages was held by a few wealthy and influential families. They could not be dispossessed, as confiscation by the state is always a national crime which only revolutionary governments have sanctioned. The Popes tried to persuade these rich families to change the system of labor adopted by them and to convince them that it would be to their advantage to adopt another. They tried it in vain; the few who listened to the advice of the pontiffs, seeing their example was not followed, went back to the old method, which was more profitable though the whole country suffered from it.

The system adopted during many centuries by the aristocracy was that which is called in France *grande culture* and which is at present introduced into the northwestern States of this country. There are now in Minnesota, Dakota and other territories farms of ten thousand nay, twenty thousand acres owned by companies who employ large numbers of laborers and agents for the cultivation of immense estates so that not a village is seen except in the form of huts in which the laborers sleep at night. This was the condition of the Roman Campagna; and as the noble families who owned the soil were all friendly to each other, there was no need of hedges and fences between the various estates; a road or path sufficed for all the purposes of boundaries.

When therefore you looked from the top of a high edifice in Rome, you saw all around a level plain, green

and blooming in early spring, but gray and dreary after June. The huts of the laborers being small and in the form of beehives are not even visible in the cheerless expanse, where no trees are planted and no houses built. The soil being extremely rich, immense crops of hay and grain were produced at very little expense. At ploughing and harvesting time troops of laborers came from the surrounding regions, chiefly from the kingdom of Naples; the remainder of the year a small number of men sufficed for disposing of the crops and watching over the herds of cattle which were fattened on those plains for the neighboring market of Rome. This cheap way of cultivating the land was the main reason why the land-owners refused to adopt the plan proposed by the Popes, namely to divide their property into farms and establish there peasant families who might have lived in villages or in farm-houses scattered over the plain. I saw just outside the gates of Rome in the neighborhood of San Lorenzo several settlements formerly undertaken by landlords agreeably to the wishes of the pontiffs, but already abandoned and going to ruin.

These poor laborers of the Roman Campagna shall first occupy our attention. I had occasion to see in Rome a certain number of those working hands who had come from a distance to gather in the hay and grain. As to the few cotters who occupied the estates the whole year I visited some of them during my pilgrimage to Subiaco.

In July, 1837, I was sent several times to hear the confessions of a number of them to whom some of our young Fathers gave a kind of retreat to prepare them for their Easter duty. They had not been able to

attend to it during the time of their labor, since there were neither churches nor clergymen sufficiently near. It was their long-established custom toward the end of the harvest to come to the city for a few days before going home and attend to their spiritual needs in churches provided for them. These poor people did not need any lodging-places, since it scarcely ever rains in Rome in summer and they are accustomed to sleep in the open air. They stretched themselves under the portico of some palatial residence from which they never were driven away, or under the projecting eaves of some old ruined buildings which abounded in the city. During the day, also, when they were not occupied in church they took their simple meals under the shadow of a majestic colonnade or under the porch of a stately church.

I often saw them munching a *pagnotta* of very fine white bread such as the French peasants or soldiers never touch, and the seasoning consisted either of a big and ripe tomato, or, when they could dispose of a stray penny, of a good slice of watermelon greatly superior to those we meet with in this country. Still they were sufficiently miserable if their social status was considered according to the principles of modern sociology. They had left their wives and families at home, and a wretched home it must have been. The wages they received from their labor were excessively low, but I never heard of strikes either among them or other laborers and mechanics. The only thing, therefore, they had in the world was the small amount of money they carried with them, which would be exhausted soon after their return home because they were sure to find debts on their arrival. There

was no hope that their condition would ever improve. Just as they had lived until then, they must live until their death, and they could not expect that their children would be better off. None of them, I am sure, could read and write; and the idea of improving their mind was a Utopia they never thought of in their dreams.

There was, however, one redeeming feature in their condition and this was that they need not fear starvation. As long as they could work, they were sure of a living; for food and clothing such as they used were extremely cheap and always within their reach. When they fell sick and could no more attend to their wants there were everywhere charitable institutions, either public or private, provided for them, of which they could avail themselves without feeling ashamed of partaking of charity. In all Catholic countries there may be many poor people, but there are no paupers. The meaning of this last word is perfectly unknown. Morally, they were good men, knew the Commandments of God and in general kept them. I became acquainted with their spiritual condition and can say that they led Christian lives. No doubt, they enjoyed no exemption from human frailty, but I was taken by surprise after a few hours of ministry among them to find so few breaches of God's Commandments. Intemperence was almost unknown among them and unchastity rare. Anger and the thirst for revenge were, as is well known, their chief delinquency; but I never heard of the fury of a bloody *vendetta* so generally attributed to the Corsicans. Their ideas of men and things were naturally very limited; but it is well known that much knowledge is compatible with great

moral degradation. I saw no degradation among the poor laborers of the Roman Campagna.

So far I have spoken of workmen who came from beyond the frontier of the Papal States to work for a month or two only. What of those who continued to reside the whole year in the wretched huts scattered here and there over the plain? I saw much less of them than of the former. In my pilgrimage, however, I have entered with Father Zuliani, my companion, some of their huts and can at least describe what I saw. These lowly cots in the form of beehives were only high enough for a man to stand in; a small aperture enabled the people to creep in; and there was no door to close the hut nor window to give it light. The material was merely twisted straw tightly secured on posts which could not be seen from outside. They were so compact as to be perfectly rainproof and could be kept dry and clean inside. The people evidently occupied them only during the night or in case of a sudden and prolonged shower, which is a very rare occurrence from April to November in the neighborhood of Rome.

It was not inside of these strange little dwellings that they cooked their meals, because it would not have been prudent to light a fire in the interior. The cooking was done outside in the open air as in a camp or a caravan. I imagine that four or five men could stretch themselves in one of those cots on a bed of dry hay, which seemed to be the only bed they had, and there they spent the night in security. After the harvest was disposed of a large number of cattle were fattened for the market under the care of these poor men and this was the chief revenue of the land-

lords, who did not care to derive a larger profit from a more scientific method of cultivating the land. From this short description it is plain that the material welfare of these rustics was not superior to that of African negroes.

Were their souls better cared for? I can scarcely give a satisfactory answer. At that time I had no idea of ever writing an account of this pilgrimage and consequently neglected to inquire about it or at least to get information on the subject. I am convinced that they were not left altogether without the means of practicing their religion. The land-owners were highly educated Christian gentlemen and knew their duty towards the poor men whom they employed for years together on their domains. In case they had shamefully neglected their trust the Church authorities at Rome could not have forgotten so many souls immediately dependent on them. I am sure that they received regular visits from clergymen—chiefly from Franciscan Friars—who could easily reach them from Rome, Tivoli, Frascati, and other towns of the neighborhood. As there were no churches in the Campagna, some means must have been devised for their instruction and the reception of the Sacraments by them. This is my firm conviction.

That they were in great spiritual destitution appears from some words uttered by Father Roothaan, our Very Rev. Father-General, in my presence. He was speaking of those among us who felt an inclination for foreign missions and begged to be sent to the Indians of Asia or America. "Indians!" he exclaimed, "there is no need of going to Asia or America to minister to them. They are sufficiently numerous around

Rome, and I would wish we could attend to them, as they are our near neighbors." The reader has, I hope, sufficiently understood the difficulty there was in the way of doing so. The rich land-owners to whom the soil belonged had always opposed the projects of the Popes who were in favor of dividing this vast district into farms. This first step being taken, villages with churches and schools would have naturally sprung up and the seeds of civilization would have been sown under the fostering care of religion. To constrain by force the land-owners to adopt a measure to which they were opposed would have interfered with their right of property. The Popes could not think of it and they tried the only means that remained in their power by acting individually on the best disposed among them. The result was trifling and ended in failure. The old system continued with the results which I have described. All that can be said is that the poor people who suffered under this system did not dream of a better state of things. So much is certain that the spirit of rebellion never spread among the laborers of the Roman Campagna. The secret societies which were at that time so active in Italy did not think it worth their while to enroll them among their members and quiet continued to prevail in those dreary solitudes. We shall now turn to the peasant class.

I studied it carefully, first among the market gardeners in the suburbs of Rome, and secondly, all along the Anio River from Tivoli to the frontier of the kingdom of Naples. The market gardeners will require but a few words. The extensive garden of the Jesuit novitiate, St. Andrea a Monte Cavallo, inclined south-

ward to the valley of the Viminal, and the church of St. Vitale built inside of the exterior wall opened on the valley itself so as to let in on Sundays the population of the neighborhood who came to hear Mass and receive the Sacraments. This ancient church, built in the fifth century, repaired and adorned by many Popes, being an annex to the novitiate, was entrusted to our care and every Sunday morning Father Cocchi, our treasurer or procurator, went to hear the confessions of the people and one of the young priest-novices preached and another said Mass. In 1836 I was often sent to say Mass and became acquainted with many things of interest regarding this congregation of worshippers. It was not, of course, a parish, but was called a *congregazione* or sodality, all those who came being enrolled in the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin. They were all engaged in the cultivation of vegetables and fruits for the markets of the city and belonged to the peasant class, though living in the midst of citizens and burghers.

There were no streets, but only narrow and straight roads in the greater part of the Viminal and Esquiline districts. There was scarcely any other industry than market-gardening and perhaps a few *locande*, so that it was a very quiet and almost rural part of the city. The two young Fathers who went to help Father Cocchi breakfasted with him after service in a small apartment adjoining the church before returning to the novitiate on the other side of the garden. From our conversations during breakfast I learned that the little plots of ground cultivated by those simple people did not belong to them but were rented from the owners; that the gardeners could just live comfortably on th

earnings, that is to say, their labor procured for them what was strictly necessary but nothing beyond. They had no church dues to pay—I never saw the collection plate passed during service—the taxes were paid not by them but by the land-owners, and the expense for fuel was confined to the small fire required for the cooking of their meals. Owing to the mildness of the climate, which relieved them of the necessity of warming their houses in winter, their simple way of living kept them healthy and it was seldom indeed that the doctor was called; their clothing was perhaps too scant and I have often seen men coming to church or even presenting themselves at the Holy Table without a coat, but nobody minded it and I am sure God was not displeased. Bread of an excellent quality being extremely cheap and meat seldom indulged in, the vegetables which composed their ordinary food being the fruit of their own industry, and wine almost unknown among them, it is not surprising that they were contented and that they were thankful to God for the blessings they enjoyed. I have heard from a Catholic clergyman who had been many years pastor of a congregation of weavers in Lancashire, England, that often when he addressed his flock on Sundays he was struck with the idea that the people in that district of Great Britain seldom ate a hearty meal. He said that they looked as if their stomachs were always half empty and that they were constantly suffering from the pangs of hunger. This was not the case with the market-gardeners of the Viminal and the Esquiline in Rome, at least in 1836. But if the material necessities of these people were not neglected, those of their souls were still better

attended to. These poor men not only knew how to pray in their humble dwellings, not only did they teach their children the sublime prayers given us as an heirloom by Christ and His Church, but the public service of God was sacred in their eyes and they never absented themselves from the usual exercises of Sunday morning. They came to confess their sins, to assist at the Holy Sacrifice, and frequently to receive Holy Communion. Many of them did so in the church of St. Vitale every week during the whole year and it was sufficient to look at them in God's house to become convinced not only of their sincerity, but likewise of the heartiness of their piety.

After having begun the day by these holy exercises, they rested from labor during the remaining hours and enjoyed the privilege of finding in Rome every attraction best adapted to soothe the feelings and quiet the mind. Visiting those magnificent churches replete with the productions of the greatest artists, listening to the strains of a music almost worthy of heaven, or admiring nature in the shady avenues of villas generously opened by their owners to people of every age and condition—such was the usual manner of spending Sunday in Rome during the two years I lived there.

Our pilgrimage to Subiaco already spoken of made us somewhat acquainted with the farmers of the Campagna. Leaving the ruins of the Hadrian Villa to our right, we slowly ascended the main road running northeast toward Tivoli and met with a class of people very different from the one we were leaving behind. People were going on the road in various directions and by their garb it was easy to see they

were peasants. Sometimes we met them in small groups of two or three, sometimes single men or women walked across or followed the road as their business prompted. Being dressed as pilgrims, we were easily recognized as religious and we soon found out the feelings of the people we met. They always addressed us with the words *Sia lodato Gesu Cristo*, to which we answered, *Sempre sia lodato*. There was no need of a longer conversation with them and they did not appear to feel so inclined on their side. But the expression of their faces spoke sufficiently and on two or three occasions some women came to us and knelt to receive our blessing and then went away in appearance fully satisfied.

Evidently the peasant classes of Tivoli and the poorer classes of the Campagna had not yet imbibed the spirit of the Revolution. I had proof of this not only from what I had seen on the road, but also from what I saw that very evening in the church attached to the college. As it was the month of May, there were religious exercises every evening in honor of the Blessed Virgin. I was surprised at the number of people who attended church and their evident devoutness. From the window of the college I could see the streets in the neighborhood alive with men, women and children, as if it had been one of the greatest solemnities of the year. Their clothes were decent and clean, especially those of the women, who in addition to a woolen petticoat going down to their feet wore a lighter dress which before starting they had thrown from behind over their heads. They looked like nuns in front and made it needless for them to put on a bonnet and veil, which their means would not have allowed them

to purchase. The effect produced was nearly that of the black mantilla with which Spanish ladies formerly covered their heads and shoulders; it was as modest and almost as pleasant to look at and well became a woman going to church. On entering the church the view was striking and solemn. The women, apart from the men, were kneeling or squatting on the floor—as usually in Italy there were neither seats nor pews—the men, kneeling also, or standing after having said their prayers, were waiting in silence and in a most respectful attitude for the exercises to begin. These consisted of the instruction which Zuliani had been invited to give and of the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. It is needless to say that the worshippers all joined in singing the *Tantum Ergo*. This would go a long way to predispose a fair judge in their favor. Here was a peasant population, for the great majority of them were farmers dwelling in the suburbs of the town. Had they not been sincerely religious they would not have come to kneel or stand in a church for a whole hour in the evening and no one could have blamed them for preferring to have a chat in their cottages after their daily toil.

The Fathers of Tivoli confirmed me fully in the favorable impression which the neighboring peasants had made on me.

In and about Arsoli, as I had learned during the pilgrimage described by me before, the condition and animus of the Italian farming classes were very similar and certainly superior to that of the French peasantry.

The condition and spirit of the middle classes I

had but scanty opportunity to observe. I remember that during my pilgrimage to the *Sacro Speco* I passed through Subiaco. Here when Zuliani and I walked across one of the squares, near one side of which was a large hotel, we found quite a gathering of men belonging apparently to the more ambitious classes. When we passed them a significant silence prevailed and their looks expressed eloquently their surprise at meeting two pilgrim Jesuits in the midst of an enlightened city, as Subiaco certainly was in their eyes. As soon as we turned the corner of the street a loud murmur of voices rose among them, and because there could be no reason for it except our unexpected presence we inferred that it was a way of manifesting their antipathy for the Jesuit's robe and the pilgrim's staff. An hour later in the Benedictine monastery, when enjoying the hospitality of the French prior at supper, our conjectures were confirmed by his description of the spirit then spreading among lawyers, physicians, and tradesmen in opposition to the government of the Papal States. This was the first sign of this feeling which I had noticed in Italy. Yet Mazzini had already been at work several years.

I never became personally acquainted with any Carbonaro. In my time there was much talk of Carbonarism in general, though its origin and secret workings appeared to be unknown. Its results, however, were visible everywhere in Italy. The attempt to upset the Papal government in Bologna and Rome in 1831 was too recent to have been forgotten, but the real aims of the sect were still mysterious and known but to a few. It appears that Carbonarism

had its origin at the beginning of this century in the kingdom of Naples and soon spread over the whole of Italy, reaching France in time to prepare the revolution of 1830. Freemasonry, as is well known, was more than a hundred years older in France, England, and Germany than in Italy, and there is no doubt that the first designers of Carbonarism were adepts in its doctrines, since they copied its chief features and rites and their object at the bottom was the same, namely the subversion of Church and State as they were then constituted.

Towards 1808 or earlier a number of Neapolitans, most of them employed in charcoal making in the wild districts of the Abruzzi and Calabria, began to organize themselves into a secret society which they called the Carbonari. The Freemasons were their models. A lodge they called a *barracca*, a hut; an ordinary meeting of a lodge went by the name of *vendita*, a sale; meetings of a higher importance with superior officers were called *alta vendita*. Thus their phrascology was derived from their industry, charcoal-making. Being discontented alike with the Bourbon and the Bonapartist rule, they appeared at first inclined to adopt republican views of government; but after a while being convinced of the impossibility of carrying out this system among the Neapolitans, they expressed themselves satisfied with a constitutional and liberal system of administration. Their numbers and influence spread so rapidly that both Ferdinand, the Bourbon king, and Murat, the brother-in-law of Napoleon, tried to gain them over. For a while the Carbonari sided with the legitimate ruler. There was even a moment when, with

the help of an English fleet, Murat would have been driven away from his capital and Ferdinand restored, if the victory of Napoleon at Wagram had not obliged the English to withdraw. Thus the Carbonari at first hesitated about the policy they should adopt.

Then some men of higher rank in society, altogether destitute of morality and religion, having obtained great authority among them, a change took place in their statutes and rites which placed them in the ranks of the enemies of society.

These new leaders of Carbonarism were aware that the people of the country were strongly attached to the Catholic religion and open opposition to it would repel the people of Naples. They therefore retained the Catholic phraseology in their rites so that only the initiated could understand their true meaning. According to Father Deschamps, in his *Les Sociétés Secrètes et la Société*, "Our Lord Jesus Christ was their supreme chief; they called him the Son of God. . . . In the two first grades chiefly the three persons of the Most Holy Trinity were mentioned, as also the names of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph, of the Apostles; Baptism, original sin, mortal sins were enumerated (apparently in the Catholic sense). Often likewise allusion was made to the Cross, the Crown of Thorns, the Scourging at the Pillar; and the ordinary watch-words were Faith, Hope, and Charity." But underneath these phrases was concealed a spirit hostile to Christianity.

But soon political fanaticism engrossed the whole attention of the Carbonari and they laughed at religion, which was only a cloak to cover the designs of their leaders. The Church, besides, happening shortly after

to condemn this sect as well as all other secret societies, they turned against her as their greatest enemy and every thing or person connected with the Catholic religion became contemptible and odious in their eyes. Christ, of course, was a hero and his primitive religion an admirable institution, but the priests and monks were impostors who had corrupted Christianity and deserved hatred and contempt.

In my travels through Tuscany on my way to Rome, I generally found the middle class hostile to religion, particularly in Florence, Leghorn, and Pisa. I remarked that in the hotels on Friday and Saturdays all ate meat and I often found some difficulty in procuring meagre fare. The few monks and *frati* who showed themselves in the streets looked exactly as relics of past ages, mouldering away for a few years longer. In public places this anti-Christian tendency was most surprising to me. In general, however, I experienced kindness on the part of my fellow travellers in spite of my cassock; but I soon found out that this was chiefly owing to the fact that they knew I was a Frenchman; they forgave my religion on account of my nationality.

At Pisa, being obliged to take my dinner at a public hotel and finding myself seated near an Italian religious of some Order unknown to me, I saluted him. My neighbor of the other side, who had been very kind to me in the stage from Leghorn and who at my request had brought me to this hotel as one of the best in Pisa, made a sign to me to abstain from conversing with a *frate* and whispered in my ear something to the effect that I would lower myself by doing so. This opposition to priests was mainly confined to the middle

classes and there was still a deep feeling of religion among the plain people. Whenever I entered a church in which there was some *funzione* going on I saw a great number of men standing or kneeling piously in the middle nave, a spectacle which was at that time very unfrequent in France. But the extravagant admiration for Gallic culture, prevalent in all classes of society, disposed the Italians to religious indifferentism and the Carbonari all combined to undermine the influence of the clergy and especially of the regular Orders.

Another feature of social conditions in Italy was a profound political agitation which, being repressed by force, especially by Austrian influence, became only the stronger and considerably increased the social danger. The press could speak only in the most guarded terms of the aspirations of the Italians which the civil rulers were determined never to grant. No book was allowed to circulate advocating openly what were called liberal doctrines. No public protest could be uttered against a crushing oppression which many in secret called a harsh despotism. But this death-like silence was an ominous sign of a coming revolution. Having come lately from a country where the liberty of the press and of the platform was proclaimed and whose public papers and public speeches went sometimes as far as open rebellion, though there were laws prescribing limits to that freedom, I was struck by this silence. I was almost afraid of living in such a country as this, because I was aware that there were volcanoes ready to burst everywhere, and I was persuaded that the exterior repression which delayed the eruption could not endure for a long time.

I belonged to an Order which was supposed by outsiders to be arrayed on the side of despotism against the people, and this opinion of the Jesuits was, I knew, far from correct, though we could not speak openly. Still I shuddered when I reflected on the probable consequences of that opinion and of our silence. I think I can speak openly now and my views may convey a useful lesson for the future without compromising the great social principles which a Christian and religious is bound to uphold. The Jesuits were strictly forbidden by their rules and the orders of their generals to meddle with politics in any way. In fact in the thirties of this century the clergy, both regular and secular, avoided the public discussion of the great political questions of the day. In mediæval times they freely expressed their opinion in all social questions, because besides being ecclesiastical rulers they formed an essential branch of the body politic, and felt it their duty to interest themselves in affairs of state. The Jesuits, however, did not exist at that time.

After the Reformation the clergy continued to take the same interest in public affairs, partly owing to the union of Church and State. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries some Jesuits were occasionally employed by sovereigns or States as political agents or diplomats, e.g., Possevin in Poland. According to the views of the period they felt it their duty to perform these services for the countries in which they were born or lived. Even in such cases the generals of the Order never approved of this view except when the interest of the Church required it. In our own days, so far as I know, the Order has never meddled

in political affairs, and I think that had it done so I should have known it. Our sympathies, undoubtedly, were conservative and anti-revolutionary; but our views were never expressed publicly. In fact, the Jesuits scarcely knew what was going on in the world outside, at least in Italy. Not only did they not carry on any correspondence with political men of any country, but the few papers they read threw but little light on political affairs.

I sometimes laughed in my sleeve when comparing the knowledge these good Fathers in Rome had of passing events with what I had seen among my friends, the young professors in the *Petit Séminaire de Nantes* after 1830 in France. These certainly kept fairly well posted on what was actually going on in the political world. Each of us subscribed to a review or to some influential daily paper, and the whole collection becoming public property among us we had a respectable reading-room of these sources of information, which we considered necessary in these troublous times. This was the case everywhere in France among young clergymen. In Rome, when I saw in the recreation rooms of the novitiate, the Roman College, or the Gesú itself, the few insignificant sheets that were placed on the table for the instruction of the old Fathers—for neither the novices, nor the students of philosophy and theology were ever allowed to take them in their hands and read them—I was sometimes astounded at the reputation the Jesuits had acquired as political plotters and mute workers at the crushing machine of despotism all over the world.

But did they not in the Papal States uphold the

tyranny of an effete government? etc., etc. It was said at the time that the General of the Jesuits, Father Roothaan, was the "Black Pope" and inspired the "White Pope," Gregory XVI, with his policy which was in the main that of Austria, etc. The Jesuits confined themselves entirely to their spiritual or educational work. They were professors in colleges, preachers or confessors in churches, active in works of charity, in hospitals, prisons, reformatories. These constant objects of their care required all their time and attention. Occasionally, no doubt, Father Roothaan was called to the Vatican; far less often, however, than was generally supposed. No one knew what was the object of his conversations with the Pope. How could the Father General know more of politics than his brethren, who, as was seen, were totally ignorant of them? Father Roothaan did not read the papers any more than the other Jesuit Fathers. Having to govern his Society, he was too much occupied in corresponding with them on their internal affairs to find a moment's time for writing to politicians of any nation.

In their public preaching the Jesuits occasionally at Rome spoke of the crime of treason against the State as they would of any other crime forbidden by the law of God, and I heard some very effective sermons of that kind at the Gesú. But they dealt with them as moral subjects which could not be neglected in a series of Lenten discourses. Every one knew that there were plotters against the temporal authority of the Pope; it was but fair to warn the faithful, who came to hear an explanation of God's law against the allurements of sects which had already been condemned

by the Supreme Pastor. But were not the Jesuits the tools of the Austrians in Italy? There were at the time very few Jesuits in Austria and these did not dare to raise their voices through fear of expulsion if they did so. The relations of the Jesuits and the Austrian government were far from being friendly, and the cabinet of Vienna since the days of Joseph II was always indisposed to use the Jesuits or any other religious influence in their efforts to rule the various nationalities which composed their mixed confederation or empire.

In Austria young men of promise belonging to good families who wished to join the Order were as far as possible prevented from doing so. For this statement I have the authority of Father Bresciani, who was minister of the novitiate of S. Andrea in 1836. His family was one of the most respectable of Verona and he was consequently an Austrian subject. Feeling a strong inclination to quit the ranks of the secular clergy to which he belonged and to embrace the religious life of the Society, he did not think it necessary to keep his intention to himself and spoke of it to his friends. As soon as it became known to the government officials in Verona, his family was warned by the authorities at Vienna to prevent the young man from indulging his fancy. Long negotiations ensued which ended in the certainty that his liberty would be restrained if he was not amenable to reason. He therefore fled to Rome, but could not openly avow himself a Jesuit. During twelve long years he lived incognito in various houses under an assumed name, and it was only when the Vienna government saw the uselessness of their perse-

cution that he was allowed to resume his name and appear before the world as a Jesuit. He assured me that the Austrian government had no reason to act as it did except the dislike of the Austrian rulers to so unpopular a body of men as the Jesuits were.

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